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Displacement, Rehabilitation and Resettlement: The Case of Maldhari Families of Gir Forest

Varsha Ganguly

This article documents the process of displacement, rehabilitation and post-rehabilitation phase of the pastoral families of Gir forest It articulates issues for rehabilitation and resettlement, such as the concept of 'good governance' versus 'govern-mentality' (the dominance of state over natural resources and lives of forest residents, especially tribals) for the betterment of the displaced families, the need to equip the stakeholders for change in the economy and income-generation activities through imparting skills, tools and know-how, the measures to minimise adverse changes in sociocultural relations due to their spatial movements, and the way to reduce their vulnerability and marginalisation due to lack of political clout in the post-displacement phase. The article emphasises that the state has to adopt a participatory approach for the desired development of the stakeholders, that is, the residents of sanctuaries, especially when it has to deal with tribes whose subsistence economy ıs pastoralısm

The debate on development-induced displacement and the need for just and proper rehabilitation and resettlement has addressed multiple facets of the process, and it has stressed on the role of government to minimise displacement to prevent sufferings of project-affected people due to impoverishment and dispossession and to prevent social disarticulation and erosion of cultural values, especially of the scheduled castes (dalits), scheduled tribes (adivasi) and women. The debate has also demanded rehabilitation as a fundamental right, an informed and rational choice of the affected people, and, in response to these demands, guidelines for rehabilitation and resettlement have been evolved by social activists and academicians to strengthen the case of prospective project-affected persons. Different agents engaged in the process of displacement and rehabilitation and resettlement have stressed the need for region-specific and community-specific studies to describe the predicament of project-affected persons in different parts of India

This article describes the impact of displacement on the *maldhari* (pastoral) families of Gir forest of Gujarat rehabilitated during 1972 and

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1986 It focuses on three aspects (1) methodology for collecting data, as data were collected between 1996 and 2000, more than a decade after displacement, rehabilitation and resettlement, (11) different units for data collection and analysis for generalisation as well as for maintaining the distinct features of each *vasahat* (resettlement colony), families, castes and community to describe the impact of displacement on their quality of life, and (111) the desired role of government in rehabilitation and resettlement in the case of displacement from the protected area, that is, the Gir forest

Based on primary data, this article articulates issues for rehabilitation and resettlement of pastoral communities residing in forests, such as, the need to equip them for the change in economy—from pastoral activity to agriculture—and for income-generation activities through imparting training in skills and tools, minimising adverse changes in socio-cultural relations due to their spatial movements, and reducing their vulnerability and marginalisation due to lack of political clout in the post-displacement phase, as the number of displaced families was not very big. In this light, the article emphasises that the state has to adopt a participatory approach for the desired development of the stakeholders, that is, the residents of sanctuaries

The Maldhari Families of the Gir Forest

'Maldhari' is an occupational term that denotes an income-generation activity carried out by different castes and communities in the Gir forest of Gujarat The maldhari of Gir are 'settled pastorals' as they have been the residents of the forest and wandering for grazing within the forest Their main economic activity is cattle-rearing-maintaining milch cattle and sheep, and selling milk, milk products and natural manure

The *maldhari* of Gir are comprised of many castes like Charan, Bharwad, Rabari in majority, few Koli, Ahir (Kathi), Bawa and Meghwal families as well as Makrani, who are Muslims The *maldhari* of Gir, Alech and Barda forests have been accorded the status of 'primitive tribe' (among Scheduled Tribes) since 1956, outside these forests, Charan, Rabari, Bharwad, Koli, Bawa and Ahir belong to the category of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes and the Meghwal belong to Scheduled Castes Thus, each caste has multiple political and socioreligious statuses

Each pastoral caste has its distinct social identity with its marriage practices, religious ceremonies, cultural traditions and style of dressing for men and women The castes-Charan, Rabari, Bharwad and scheduled castes-have a distinct marriage practice called *sata paddhati*-an under-

standing between two families for marriage of their children that both will exchange their daughters for the sons of the family, preference being given for cross cousin (children of brother and sister, mama-phoina) marriage. In case the first cross cousin exchange is not possible, then the family concerned has to replace the daughter or the son from its extended family, and, if unable to do so, the family has to pay a good sum of money to get the bride or the groom for its son or daughter respectively. All these castes allow widow remarriage. Charan are known for singing their traditional cultural songs called duha and chhand.

The Displacement

The displacement of *maldhari* families from the Gir Sanctuary in Junagadh district of Gujarat is the first of its kind in the state, no displacement from the forest for the conservation of wildlife has effectively taken place before The Gir forest is the last abode of the Asiatic lion and is also considered to be a part of range of hills—Aiech, Barda and Gir, in the far west of Gujarat, covering more than 300 km stretch of flora and fauna till the beginning of the twentieth century Socially and culturally, the residents of these forests are kith and kin

The Government Gazetteer of Junagadh district reports that, in the late 1960s, international wildlife conservation experts and members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resource (IUCN) visited the Gir forest and raised the issues for conservation and protection of the Asiatic lions in the forest (Government of Gujarat 1976 89-93) In the early 1970s, the Forest Department of the Gujarat Government prepared a Rehabilitation Package for the maldhari families inhabiting the forest. This Package is considered to be a pioneer of the sort, as in the 1970s there was no precedent for such a package Yet, looking at the living conditions of the maldhari after a few years of rehabilitation, one feels that it has not been able to bring the desired results, many dynamics have contributed to the present living conditions of the maldhari families For example, the vasahats were spread over 70 km north to east and 170 km east to west, very far from each other and from the Gir forest As a consequence, these families could not continue with their pastoral activities With this pattern of rehabilitation, ten out of twenty-eight vasahats were vacated within a decade of rehabilitation, as these families faced various difficulties-changes in economic activity. inadequate infrastructure facilities, political negligence and social disarticulation

No details are available on how the Rehabilitation Package was formulated-how and why the specific items were selected for the

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package ¹ The items in the Package include (i) allotment of 3 hectares of land for cultivation, (ii) house-site (600 square meters for each family), (iii) electric connection to each family, and facility for drinking water, (iv) primary school, health care and veterinary services, wherever required, (v) Rs 7,500 were to be paid towards the construction of the house, levelling the land, transportation of household from the Gir forest to the *vasahat*, and (vi) continuation of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status Among these, the first and second provisions are considered to be very good, and the sixth item has been adopted by the National Policy on Rehabilitation and Resettlement, 2003

In the early 1970s, the Forest Department of Gujarat government prepared a list of all the residents of Gir forest for the implementation of Rehabilitation Package under two categories 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' maldhari families. The criteria² for this categorisation were not well defined. They are neither available from the government departments concerned, nor are the forest officials aware of them. In all, 845 maldhari families were identified as 'permanent' families and eligible for the benefits under the Rehabilitation Package, and the 'non-permanent' families were asked to leave the forest immediately without any compensation from the government. In 1973-74, the Forest Department transferred the project to the Junagadh Zilla Panchayat for implementation, particularly for the allocation of cultivable land and pastures to the families.

Between 1972 and 1986, in all 592 out of the 845 'permanent' maldhari families were rehabilitated by the Revenue Department in twenty-eight vasahats in eight taluka (taluka or block) of Junagadh district, adjoining Gir (West) and three in Amreli district, adjoining Gir (East), there were two to four vasahats in each taluka, with mixed population, that is, families belonging to different castes There has been a gradual decline in the number of resettled families—from 592 to 239 over 15 years (see Table 1).

Documenting the Impact of Displacement after 10 Years of Resettlement

The study on which this paper is based was carried out during 1996 and 2000 with focus on 'quality of life' as an overarching concept that incorporates documentation of changes in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres. The objective was to know whether the quality of life of the displaced families had improved after their rehabilitation. Furthermore, some *maldhari* families are staying in the Gir forest in *nes* (hamlet), and a comparison between these residents of the forest and the

Year	Decline in the number of families-from 592 to 239
During 1972-86	592 out of the 845 'permanent' maldharı famılıes were rehabilitated in 28 vasahats in 8 taluka (blocks) of Junagadh district and three in Amreli district
In 1986-87	459 families in 18 vasahats-10 were vacant, as reported by the Evaluation Report (ER) of the rehabilitation package
In 1992-93	323 families in 18 <i>vasahats</i> , as reported by a survey conducted by the Forest Department of Gujarat government
In 1996-97	239 families in 18 vasahats along with 76 'extended' or 'additional' families as found by the instant study
In 1998 and 2004	About 42 families have out-migrated in search of employment

Table 1 Gradual Decline in Resettled Families

displaced families was expected to shed important light on the postrehabilitation predicament of the *maldhari* families. We also documented the views of non-*maldhari*s on displacement and rehabilitation

The consequences of displacement for different families and castes, as also the views of vasahat residents on displacement were so varied that presenting them in general terms offers no scope for understanding their case Moreover, the representation of each caste and the number of vasahat residents was small (not more than 50 families in most of the resettlement colonies). The dual political and social identity of these castes was an additional confusing factor in documenting the impact of displacement, as compared to any forest-dwelling tribe The only document available on the subject is an Evaluation Report on the Rehabilitation Package prepared by the Directorate of Evaluation, Guiarat Government in 1986-87 (see Government of Gujarat 1987), This Report is the first documentation on the impact through statistical methods, with comparison between the displaced (called 'shifted') families and 'nonshifted' families, who continued to reside in the Gir forest. It assessed the implementation of each item of the rehabilitation package and its consequences after 10 years of displacement Finally, to have a holistic approach for documenting the impact of displacement from the forest, we may identity the following three different but interrelated units of analysis

- 1 Vasahat-as a geographic unit, where the families were rehabilitated
- 2 Pastorals as a community (social and economic identity), further articulated with impact on families and castes
- 3 Pastoral women, also a core part of family, community and vasahat

Impact of Displacement, Rehabilitation and Resettlement

The impact of displacement, rehabilitation and replacement has been discussed with reference to three units of analy is-namely, vasahat, castes and communities, and women-along with some observations made by the Evaluation Report (Government of Gujarat 1987)

At the vasahat level, most of the problems observed were due to three reasons (1) non-implementation of a promise to resettle the families in the periphery of Gir forest, so that they could continue with their pastoral activity, (11) the stakeholders were not consulted before rehabilitation at the vasahat, and they were resettled arbitrarily over 14 years, as per availability of land, and (111) the families were scattered over very large distances and eight blocks of the district, thereby causing social disarticulation, political marginalisation and bureaucratic neglect

There is not a single vasahat where all facilities have been provided as promised under the Rehabilitation Package Basic facilities like drinking water was available effectively in 6 vasahats, primary education, in 5, approach road, in 9, while no health care facility, dairy and veterinary facility was made available in any vasahat Some vasahat residents faced political marginalisation despite at least one member of the vasahat being a member of the Gram Panchayat of the village, none of them has any say in policy making or spending money or implementation of the government schemes for betterment of the vasahat This situation resulted in clashes with the host villagers of most vasahats Most vasahats had mixed population, with members of one caste being in majority and those of the rest, in minority The minority caste families have often left the vasahat due to maladjustment and a feeling of alienation Most of the land allotted to them was of poor quality, being sandy or rocky This led to poor production and low returns from agriculture. and the families were compelled to work as wage labourers or unskilled workers The efforts to dig wells failed, and they were trapped in debts Those who could not learn to cultivate land had to suffer more due to lack of livelihood, and they were forced to sell their ornaments to survive According to the Evaluation Report, '71 percent gross reduction in income and 82 percent in number of buffaloes and 35 percent in number of cows was observed within 10 years of displacement' (Government of Gujarat 1987 17)

To describe the impact of displacement on and the present situation of these families and their capacity to cope with the new situation, they could be divided into three groups

- 1 About 20 percent of the families are economically better off, mainly with better returns from agriculture and other economic activities, and so they have better capacity to cope with the situation
- 2 About 40 percent of the families are economically weak, but have compromised with the situation and are struggling hard for survival with multiple income-generation activities like agriculture, agricultural and/or casual labour and animal husbandry. Although their coping capacity is less, they have the ability to adjust themselves to the new environment after rehabilitation.
- 3 The rest, about 40 percent of the families have not been able to make the adjustment, and are still suffering from the effects of the traumatic experiences of unsatisfactory rehabilitation. They feel that displacement from the Gir forest has been an utter disaster for them on social economic and political counts.

Most of the *maldhari* families have faced the adverse consequences of impoverishment, dispossession of forest resources and forest produce, and a sense of alienation and maladjustment. That a large number of families (353 out of 592) have left the *vasahat* proves that many different causes have contributed to their poor living conditions and impoverishment—non-productivity of land, inability to cultivate land, lack of basic facilities, being away from forest and discontinuation of pastoral activity. external factors like drought and death of cattle and so on They were neither provided with any training for cultivation of land nor supplied with implements, seeds, credit, fertilisers soon after resettlement, which could have equipped them to face new challenges. Away from the forest, they could not continue with their pastoral activity, those who could sustain with livestock for a few years after resettlement, lost them during drought for four consecutive years in the mid-1980s, which was a big blow to their economy and lifestyle

Many of them could not come out of the trauma of leaving the forest initially, at least a third of them still long to go back to the forest. Their sense of alienation became intense with the mixed social composition of the *vasahats*, as also from social disarticulation and hostility from the host villages. Many could not learn any new income-generation activity, were unable to cultivate land and could neither sell nor lease it out, for such families, land was a dead asset. However, some of them have leased out their land for cultivation, but the return they got was as low as Rs 5,000 per annum. Their traditional knowledge of animal husbandry is of little use, as they have very small number of livestock and scant resources to sustain it

The standard of health of the *maldharı* families has deteriorated as many of them have faced the problem of malnourishment or lack of

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healthy food which they used to have in the forest The Evaluation Report recorded that their consumption of ghee was reduced by half and milk had become a rare commodity Transportation, communication and new technological inventions have remained a dream for these families, as these are neither accessible nor affordable

The differential capacity to adjust and the pursuit of new incomegeneration activities have led to income inequalities and, in turn, resulted in social inequalities. This has created new difficulties in their social relations and has raised problems regarding marriage and future prospects of their offspring. There was a traditional system of marriage among the families of Gir, Alech and Barda forests. With the sinking of the economic status of the rehabilitated families, the preferences for marriage have changed the families with better income and social status residing in the forest prefer marriage of their children into families of equal status. The economic and social inequalities have, thus, worsened the prospects for marriage of the children of displaced families.

A community that was self-reliant, and which had independent way of earning livelihood with available natural resources and free access to forest produce is now dependent on various external factors, deprived of natural resources, and has to adopt to a cash-nexus economy but with greater impoverishment. It is loosing its distinct identity and self-esteem. However, despite such adverse effects, the worst results like begging, prostitution, alcoholism and violence on women, consequent to the frustration of male members in their efforts to earn etc., are not observed. The characteristics of the community with a self-image and a massimage have played a significant role in keeping the community intact. The community had been living in forest, in intimate relation with nature, and this has made its members self-reliant and inward looking.

Not more than a fifth of total women feel confident and happy after displacement due to different reasons: (1) the adverse effects of change in economic activities and change in traditional roles, (11) the loss of traditional knowledge and health, higher spending on household items due to loss of natural resources, (111) lesser security and deterioration in 'good old life'; (1v) disturbed social life and religious activities, and (v) exposure to new environment but little ability to adopt to changes in social and political spheres

Most women felt bitter about the change in economic activities, which resulted in their gradual impoverishment and burdened them to go out to earn their living. From being key persons in a pastoral economy, they have now to pursue various income-generating activities like animal husbandry, agriculture and as wage labourers. The older women do find the household responsibilities tiresome or degrading when the daughters-

in-law have to go out to earn, this feeling is very acute in the womenfolk who belong to the first generation of displaced families. Most of them felt loosing on both the counts—loss of status and increase in physical and economic burden. The younger or second generation is slowly waking up to these difficulties and handicaps. The change in economic activity has brought a change in their life cycle, as their life cycle revolves round rainy season and agriculture, with little leisure time.

Most women find the loss of natural resources like fuel, fodder, water, forest produce and medicinal and nutritional plants and herbs to be a greater loss, as they have now to face the problem of greater expenditure which did not sit well with their reduced incomes. Women had to bear a far greater burden in gathering fuel and fodder, travel longer distances and also take the help of their daughters. This deprived the girls of even the barely available educational opportunities, leading to an increase in female illiteracy. With the scarcity of water facilities in the vasahat, the task of fetching water from long distances also added to the burden and working hours of the women. Women lament the gradual loss of traditional knowledge about forest produce and medicinal herbs

Almost all women have perceived a reduction in day-to-day salaamati (security) and deterioration in saari jindagi (good life). Women considered livestock as a productive asset and they had a control over them, but displacement has forced most women to take up wage-labour to supplement the family income. Many women are not happy with the exposure to a hostile, commercial world and to the strangers who happen to be their employers. This is especially so for women who have experienced ill-treatment and verbal abuse by their employers. Moreover, working in mines or quarries is scary, and is totally different from working in the forest with cattle. This has led to a feeling of reduction in or loss of salaamati in daily life. The forced entry into the ranks of wagelabour has given rise to a feeling of degradation in their status and dependence on strangers and the outside world Social hierarchy due to economic status was not existent earlier, there is now a status hierarchy between vasahat and nes (hamlet inside the forest) and the preference for their marrying daughters in nes is prominent, as these families are better off In sata padhdhati for marriage, with some families shifting their preference for the selection of bride from the nes, a problem of imbalance has been created within the caste. In the nes, the families of close relatives were living together and women used to enjoy collective work and leisure, which they no more enjoy with less familiar neighbours at the vasahat

The exposure to the new environment has raised the level of awareness and confidence, as also the opportunities available to the women.

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However, it has not brought about any significant change in the mindset of *maldhari* women either about the traditions, land or livestock as an asset or about access to new institutions of credit and banking, participation in political institutions like Gram Panchayat and voting in different elections. The vast majority of the women feel that, with the forced changes in their occupational activity, impoverishment, increased social, economic and physical burden, loss of social status and self-esteem, feelings of alienation and deprivation, the displacement has certainly not been a change for the better. The few corresponding benefits or ameliorative measures have not made any positive difference in their life overall. However, a few young girls reported a positive change for health and hygiene with availability of sanitary pads, better undergarments and facilities for reproduction and related needs.

Desired Role of Government in Rehabilitation and Resettlement

There are mainly two considerations regarding rehabilitation and resettlement of a pastoral community, or forest dwellers, based on rehabilitation and resettlement principles (see Fernandes and Paranjape 1997 6)

- 1 To assess the rehabilitation package—its formulation, provisions, implementation, and outcome, and
- 2 Policy making-learning lessons from the past for formulating rehabilitation package for the future

The assessment of rehabilitation package incorporates the role of the state as the policy maker and as the implementing agency, and its consequences A review of the provisions of the Rehabilitation Package makes it clear that the shifting of *maldhari* families from the forest was seen only as a physical transfer of the affected population rather than as involving a wide range of changes in their social environment, living habits and lifestyle

None of the *maldhari* community leaders was informed, consulted or invited for planning the Rehabilitation Package, selection of the resettlement site, house site or land for cultivation These leaders should have been engaged in the formulation and implementation of the rehabilitation package. This raises issues of 'right to information' and 'informed consent'. For example, the *maldhari* families were not informed about the criteria for categorising the families as 'permanent' and 'non-permanent'. A few *maldhari* illustrated this point well when the Forest Department conducted the survey in the early 1970s to identify the 'permanent' families, there was a war between India and Pakistan Some

of the *maldhari* families did not register the names of all their sons, thinking that the army would take their sons to fight the war, and some could not understand the importance of registering all the names of the family members. Consequently, many of the adult sons did not get compensation under the Rehabilitation Package, and even had to leave the forest unconditionally. Had the government informed them about the purpose of this survey, the outcome would have been different

The transfer of the Rehabilitation Package from the Forest Department to the Revenue Department, not allotting 'ST' certificates and related benefits raises the issue of lack of coordination between different departments of the state government and its adverse effects on the maldhari families. Not monitoring implementation was also a lapse Each maldhari was allotted 3 hectares (that is, approximately 20 vigha or 8 acres) of land of navi sharat³ for cultivation, the family could not get any returns from selling or leasing out this land, and could only get very low returns from cultivating it. As landholders of 8 acres, all the families were classified as 'big farmers' and were disqualified from getting the benefits of governmental schemes or subsidised loans for agriculture and related activities

The issue of creating and maintaining data and access to information is important in this context. The process of displacement and rehabilitation, as also its impact, was not documented by the government, mainly due to lack of coordination among its different departments or because the officials were sceptical about its use Displacement from the forest and rehabilitation in the revenue villages, where agriculture is the main economic activity, is an example of 'mainstreaming', which reflected the lack of sensitivity towards economy, lifestyle and concerns of the displaced population Instead of recognising the difference between agriculture and pastoralism, and the importance of pastoralism as an economic activity, the planners thought of assimilating the maldhari with allotment of 3 hectares of cultivable land and a house, which was not successful In this transition, not providing training for agricultural skills, incentives for land improvement and agriculture became proof o callousness and indifference on the part of the state government, which resulted in impoverishment and socioeconomic marginalisation of the maldhari families

No effort was made to establish contact of the new settlers with the host population of neighbouring villages and to create rapport between them for sharing of common property resources, and allocation of funds and resources Many *maldhari* families are facing hostility from and clashes with the host villagers on the issues of drinking water encroachment of pastures, agricultural land and allotment of funds for

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developmental activities Closing down the grievance cell in 1986, without assessing the need or consulting any maldhari leader, was a unilateral decision. The maldhari families did not know to whom they could present their problems as they have little knowledge and no guidance about the official procedures Thus, their problems regarding basic facilities remained unresolved and gradually aggravated

The amenities promised under the Rehabilitation Package were not provided to each vasahat, the implementation was not monitored and the complaints of the maldhari were not attended to at the vasahat level. The fallouts of such overlooking were serious the maldhari families were unable to get 'ST' certificate and were not enumerated as 'Scheduled Tribes' in the census. Consequently, they could not get scholarships for education, ration cards, electricity connections, and assistance in repair or maintenance of hand pumps, wells or damaged buildings. Despite their representations, delegations and submission of memoranda to the authorities concerned, more than half the families are still deprived of the 'ST' certificate.

The closure of the primary schools and the corruption involved in providing electricity connections are evidence of lack of monitoring and maintenance of infrastructure, which have contributed to poor living conditions of the maldhari families The Evaluation Report has highlighted the significant reduction in the income of the maldhari families, their engagement in multiple income-generation activities for survival, the lack of incentives for primary education and the alarmingly low literacy level among them, and the change in their food habits and cultural activities No corrective measures have been taken the government to ameliorate the living conditions of these families in the light of the Evaluation Report No voluntary agency was assigned a role in improving the level of literacy and imparting skills for agriculture as recommended by the Evaluation Report The experience of these maldhari families reaffirm the past experiences of displaced persons, social activists and researchers (see Cernea 1995 261) and also reflect the mindsets and attitudes of planners and policy makers towards the displacement of the tribals/backward community.

Policy Making for Rehabilitation and Resettlement

Displacement of people from sanctuaries or protected areas for the conservation of such areas must be viewed differently from other development projects like, mining, irrigation and construction of roads, as the economic considerations, multiple purpose and land-use of other development projects are very different. It must be recognised that the

lifestyle, economy, culture and life cycles of the people who live in forests are significantly different from those of the settled population with agriculture as the main economic activity.

Displacement should not be seen merely as 'physical transfer' The translation and transformation of 'displacement' and 'rehabilitation' as administrative categories to the sociological (including economic, cultural and political aspects) categories is important in this regard (Das 1996). For this, the following aspects are important: (i) development of the concept of 'total rehabilitation' and calculation of compensation, (ii) need for making new laws and legal provisions related to displacement and rehabilitation, and (iii) issues related to resettlement research, with the focus on women, tribal and disadvantaged groups of the society.

The concept of 'total rehabilitation' aims to prevent adverse consequences of displacement such as dismantling of the production systems, impoverishment of project affected persons with loss of productive assets, dislocation of residential settlements, scattering of kinship groups, disruption of traditional structures and authority and solidarity, which results in social disarticulation and marginalisation of the displaced persons. The formal and informal economies are equally important while calculating compensation, that is, the value of common property resources and non-monetised items should be included

Rehabilitation should be a fundamental right of the displaced person, which is not restricted only to the grant or transfer physical assets like land. The legal procedures for *khaata fod* (equal sharing of land among the widow and children of the landholder) and/or *vaarsaai* (succession) in case of new tenure should be launched

Systematic surveys are required to know and represent project-affected persons' views, perceptions, experiences and feelings, to prevent 'information war' where cycles of 'information, 'misinformation' and 'disinformation' become weapons of the hegemonic structures Most of the displaced persons belong to the scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and rural poor like casual labour Therefore, consideration for adivasi, dalits and their women should be integral in the formulation of rehabilitation package and its monitoring

The research methods should be meaningfully employed to document the process, incorporating and coordinating the components of history, anthropology, economics and sociology, and capturing changes taking place over time With reference to the development paradigm focusing on tribals, women and such other disadvantaged groups, the worldview of these groups is very challenging, as it questions the approach of the planners and policy makers to development. It has increasingly become important to respect, protect and promote their

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rights and their socio-cultural identity. With reference to women as a focused group, it is important to consider the environment in which they live and their place in the family, caste and community.

Conclusion

The adverse changes in the life of the *maldhari* and the decline in population of the *vasahats* can be attributed mainly due to the mainstreaming policy, the tardy implementation of the Rehabilitation Package and the indifference of the government officials towards the displaced families. About a fifth of these families enjoys better standard of living, but the role of the government is marginal in improving their living conditions. Had the government adopted participatory approach for the formulation of the Rehabilitation Package and for its implementation and monitoring in this case, the story would have been different, the idea of promoting and preserving the culture of such a group would have been more acceptable.

The role of the state is crucial and would be meaningful if it promotes the concepts of 'minimising displacement', rehabilitation as a fundamental right, and informed and rational choice by the affected people, and addresses the concerns of the disadvantaged sections, especially those of the women, in the larger interests of human development, equity and social justice in the country

Notes

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- 1 The possible sources of information regarding the Rehabilitation Package are the Collector's Office, Junagadh, Rehabilitation office (which was functional during 1972 and 1986), Junagadh, Department of Forest, Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, Forest office, Sasan, and the State Archives None of these offices or their officials, or political or social leaders could provide reliable information about the Rehabilitation Package The only official source that I could tap was the Evaluation Report of the Directorate of Evaluation, Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar
- 2 The forest officials and the Collector, Junagadh needed the criteria for 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' maldhari families for the implementation of the Ecodevelopment Project and also for the interim order of the Supreme Court in the mid-

- 1990s The meetings with social activists revealed that the officials do not have any information or documents about these criteria
- 3 Navi sharat is the new tenure land According to the policy of the government, nav. sharat landholder cannot sell that land, give it on a lease, kahataa fod it (divide ramong the children of the family) or give in vaarsaai (succession)

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Homecoming: Ho Women, Work, and Land Rights in Iharkhand

Ritambhara Hebbar

The forest, for the inhabitants of Mirra village in Jharkhand, is home, renewed and re-established through their labour every year This process of renewal and restoration of the home is termed as 'homecoming', wherein the latter not only secures a home for the villagers in the forest, but also puts in place their relationship with the natural and spirit world Drawing on women's experiences and work on land and forests in Mirra village, this paper elaborates homecoming in order to highlight the significant role of women in sustaining and perpetuating traditional practices and techniques It also provides the substance for the claims of the Jharkhand movement of possessing an alternative to the destructive relationship of modern, scientific management of the natural environment. Thus, the attempt here is not only to reformulate the conventional definition of the 'home', but also to question the reservations of many within the movement over granting land rights to women in the light of the evidence that practices around land and forests owe much of its tenacity to women's work and lahour

Introduction

The Jharkhand state, as we know it today, is a truncated form of the originally proposed state. The Jharkhand movement had demanded a state comprising of the tribal districts within the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal. However, the present state includes only the eighteen tribal districts within Bihar. The originally proposed state also corresponded to the topographical division of the Chotanagpur plateau, known for its ecological and cultural diversity, both for its forest and mineral resources and for the different tribes that inhabit the area. The area has been exploited for its forest and mineral resources, which has depleted its natural resources and marginalised its people. For long, the movement resisted these processes of exploitation by demonstrating that ecological degradation and the simultaneous erosion of tribal rights on land and forests were not coincidental, and that there is an intrinsic relationship of tribes with their natural environment. It maintained that

the ecology could not be restored without respecting tribal beliefs and practices around land and forests, which presented a more humble and egalitarian alternative relationship with nature as against the one pursued by the state (see Sinha 1988, Lorduswamy 1997)

The Jharkhand movement's claim acquires authenticity from the lives and work of the forest-dwellers in the area, and which includes women's contribution. However, most leaders within the movement have expressed reservations about giving land rights to Ho women. The fear is that such a move would lead to the disintegration of Ho society. I argue that, in not considering women as rightful heirs in sustaining and practicing routine life activities around the forest, the movement is serving a losing battle. Denying women's rights on land inadvertently undermines the knowledge systems and practices integral to women's work around forest and land, which forms the bases for the struggle towards the establishment of a more humane and symbiotic relationship with nature

Here, I reconstruct the daily routine of women of Mirra village in order to elucidate the role of women in sustaining the alternative relationship with the natural environment made known by the movement as its own ¹ Presented below is the case study of a Ho woman, Suru, her daily life, work and social relationships. In this context, two additional cases are cited, which are of her two daughters—one of them is married and the other, a spinster. These cases elaborate the complex interplay between personal emotions and social values in coping with crises in her life. The intention thereby is not only to strengthen Suru's case study, but also to show the precariousness of the divide between the individual and the collective spheres of community life.

Suru is a wife of a khuntkattidar I concentrate on the khuntkattidars, as it is this category that primarily holds large plots of land and the proposed legislation will directly affect their interests than those of the others, who are not privileged in terms of either the acreage of land they hold or enjoying the protection by law The case studies are not representative of the experiences of all Ho women The purpose is not to generalise Ho women's experience of subjugation or accomplishment. but to arrive at the larger argument that granting land rights to women is not detrimental to the Jharkhandi struggle for self-rule and will only strengthen their cause The claim for self-rule has been closely associated with their struggle to retain control over their land and forests and concomitantly to preserve their culture, which is kept alive through everyday practice around land and forests I try to demonstrate how women's work and labour are integral to quotidian practices among the Ho, and how Ho knowledge system and social life are reinstated in the course of everyday life of women 2

Mirra and its People

There are 400 households in Mirra dispersed over its nine sai (hamlets) situated at a distance from each other. A Government Protected Forest surrounds Mirra. The forests are divided into Government Protected Forests (PF) called marang buru (big forest) and huding buru (small forests), commonly termed as tungri (hillock). Agricultural land is unevenly distributed in the village, most of the land is held by the descendents of the original settlers of the village. The Ho land system is founded on the khuntkatti system. The word khunt, which stands for the patrilineal descent group, is originally Munda, adopted by the British for administrative purposes. Kati has two meanings in Ho 'a sharp blade', usually attached to the natural spurs of a cock for fighting, and 'to put something horizontal'. The term 'khuntkatti' is a conjunction of these two words, 'khunt' and 'kati', which translates in English as the 'the patrilineal descent group' and 'to clear land' respectively.

Among the Ho, pre-eminence is given to the patrilineage whose ancestor was the first clearer of land and who was responsible for establishing the village. In 1920, with the Tuckey settlement, the British extended the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (1908) to Singhbhum and among the Ho With this, the privileged social status of the khuntkattidars (the descendents of the first clearer of land) was converted into a legal one and patriliny was consolidated. Like in all other Ho villages, a particular patrilineal descent group (killi) dominates in Mirra Mirra was settled by the Sinku killi. Over time, other killi members were invited to the village to work for the Sinku killi. Almost every village among the Ho has Gopes and Tantis, the castes of cattle-tenders and cloth-weavers respectively. In Mirra, the Gopes are the second largest group

Women: Work and Life

Maghe Parab is the most important festival of the Ho, marking the completion of an agricultural cycle. It is celebrated between the months of January and March. For Suru, it is more than a conclusion of all her hard work through the year and a preparation for another. It is a feeling of 'homecoming'. It is not only a realisation of her labour, but also an assertion of her sense of self, a reassurance of her existence. It is a celebration of all that she nurtured and reproduced the hearth and the community, land and forests, the world of humans and the spirits. She has worked hard to secure her place in the universe. Her journey to this state of confidence and self-assuredness has not been an easy one. It is in this sense that she feels at home.

Suru came to the village after marriage Although she had married her mother's brother's son, she was new to the village and the family she had married into She was very young when her mother died and her father remarried Her stepmother brought her up. As a young girl, she would often visit her uncle However, it is very different to reside with her uncle's family for life Soon after marriage, Suru realised that all was not well with the family and that there was tremendous antagonism between Birsa, her husband, and his elder brother Her uncle, who is now also her father-in-law, could not cope with the daily tensions within the family, and divided the property before his death. He asked the sons to cultivate their respective plots of land Birsa's younger brother decided to keep his plot joint with the eldest brother Suru and Birsa set up a separate house soon after their marriage. The first house that they constructed was too close to the jungle and was unsafe, especially during the rainy season It was about five years back that they constructed the house they presently live in The responsibility of constructing the house was entirely on Suru the organising of labour along with providing her own, supervising their work, paying them in kind (serving them divang or rice beer) and cash, procuring wood for the doors, windows and fixing the roof, and preparing bricks for the walls and smelting iron for making door latches and bolts

Although the event of constructing a separate house was an affirmation of rebellion, conflict and independence, for Birsa and Suru, it also reflected a renewed confidence in fulfilling all the responsibilities entailed in making a home Ho houses vary in size and shape, but not in structure The most important part of any Ho house is mandi owa or its kitchen (mandi in Ho means cooked rice or food and owa refers to a room or a house) It is the nucleus of the house, it is located in the interior of the house. The kitchen is also a sacred place as it houses the ading The term ading is used interchangeably to refer to the kitchen and to the fireplace where all the spirits of the dead ancestors reside The spirits are believed not only to protect and guard the family members from any evil that may befall upon them, but also protect them from the evil spirits that roam in the open and in the jungle. In this sense, it is a home within a home and, therefore, twice as much secure No one except the members of the house and the lineage can enter the ading However, the ading is also mandi owa and, as long as the fireplace is in use and burning, the ading is sheltered and venerated To keep the kitchen fire burning involves hard work through the year in the fields and forest It also entails keeping the village spirits content by worshipping them in all seasons and keeping the evil spirits that roam from one jungle to another at bay

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Suru took on the responsibility of a new house soon after marriage. It was clear to her that her life before marriage was no different, in fact, it was a preparation for her life after marriage. With passing years, Suru had earned the reputation of being very hard working Birsa, who is known to be short-tempered and egoistic, is considered fortunate to get a wife like Suru, particularly since Birsa married a third time in the desire of having a son. Suru is Birsa's second wife. Birsa's first wife expired of some illness after two years of marriage. It is then that he asked Suru to marry him.

Birsa has a job with the railways as lineman in Dungwaposi, a village which is about 4 km away from Mirra. He leaves every morning by nine only to return by six or seven in the evening Sometimes, he is required to stay back in the railway station in case there is extra work There is another reason as to why he often stays back in Dungwaposi his third wife is also employed in the railways in Dungwaposi Suru has four children through Birsa, three daughters and one son Her eldest daughter is now married, and Suru hopes to find a suitable boy for her second daughter who is about 24 years old. Her third daughter is studying in a middle school at the Block Her son, who will be appearing for the secondary school examination soon, was born after the birth of her two girls Paradoxically, both Birsa's wives conceived at the same time, and Suru gave birth to a baby boy a few days before his third wife, who also delivered a male child During those days, Birsa used to spend more time with his third wife Suru was alone in the village with her three children. there was no one to give her postnatal care Since then, she has been complaining of stomach ache, which the doctors say, and even Birsa confesses, is a result of negligence during her pregnancy and post pregnancy stage

Suru manages the house and the fields single-handedly In all, Birsa has three plots of land one is farther away from the house, in front of the primary school in the village, and the other two are near the jungle, a short walk from the house Birsa has sublet the plot near the school to a deva (shaman) in the village, a close relative of his Ever since they moved out on their own, one of their plots has been lying fallow. However, this year, Suru managed to cultivate it For all these years, this piece of land was a reminder of a task undone, reminiscent of the testing times both Suru and Birsa faced right after the division of the ancestral property They were unable to build a decent house for themselves, let alone cultivate the plots of land that accrued to them on the partition of the ancestral property Thus, the cultivation of this land was commemorative of their trying times in securing a home

The celebration of Maghe Parab in the village for the year 1997 was fixed for 15 March There is no fixed date for its celebration, it varies from year to year and from village to village. There is a general air of do and festivity around when the entire village is preparing for the celebration Suru has a number of tasks on hand The house, as it does every year, requires repairs The roof needs new kecho (tiles), the floors and walls have to be repainted Suru plans to ask the potter from the neighbouring village to make them this year instead of buying it from the weekly haat (market), though fixing it on the roof will have to be done by her. The paint on the floor and walls acts as a disinfectant and a check against pests and poisonous insects. The floors are swept with a solution made of the bark of the hatna daru (tree), by boiling the latter in water with a set quantity of washing soda. She also has to collect seeds of the baru (kusum) tree to make sunum (oil), which would be used as a part of the rituals in Maghe Parab As the year passes by, she would do the same with karanjia (karanj), nim (neem), dola (mohua), ramtiya (a yellow flower, seeds of which are pressed to obtain oil for cooking) and bindi (papaya) seeds These oils have medicinal properties and they are used for curing various skin ailments and wounds

Besides the preparations for Maghe Parab, Suru maintains her daily routine of work She gets up at the crack of dawn Her day begins by cleaning the whole house She mops the floors clean and then collects the refuse and dumps it in the pit near the house. The pit is a store for manure, compost, which will be transferred to the field once the preparation for cultivation begins. Soon it is time for her to let off the sheep, goats and oxen, as the cattle herder is at the door to take them for herding. She places containers of water on the way for the animals to drink. After the livestock is sent off for herding, Suru cleans the room in which they are kept. She collects all the dung and scattered silage in a basket and throws them into the pit. She then feeds the hens, cocks, chickens, ducks and pigeons by scattering grain in the courtyard. The daily upkeep of these birds is important, as they have a prominent place in Ho social feasts and ritual sacrifices.

Once in two days, Suru cleans the cemented floor of one of the rooms with water and the rest of the house with a solution of cow dung mixed with water According to her, this is the only way to get rid of the dust that accumulates in the house. The nearest source of water is a hand pump constructed by the government some four years back. This pump, however, needs periodic repairs, her second daughter Meena has to make a number of trips to the Block to get a plumber. When it usually dries up in summer, they have to depend on the nearest jagda (permanent source of water), which is in the jungle, about 2 km away. Suru also replenishes

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the store of water for purposes other than drinking in the house and washes the dirty dishes kept away after dinner the night before. She uses the stored drinking water left over from the previous day for watering the pots of plants hanging in the courtyard

Birsa is ready to leave for work by eight in the morning and has to be served food. Ever since Meena dropped out of school and moved to the village from her hostel at the Block, Suru finds a helping hand in her. She has taken over the responsibility of cooking in the morning. Quite often, Meena plucks vegetables from their garden, sometimes she sets off to collect spinach, which grows in the small jungle. The jungle has a wide variety of a (green leaves) that sustain the villagers all through the year a Like many others in the village who grow vegetables in the upland or in their backyards, Birsa and Suru have also maintained a small garden behind their house. In summer, it has to be watered everyday, sometimes even twice a day, which is in addition to the work on the fields that begins by the end of April

By the time Birsa leaves for work, the three people Suru hired for repairing the roof arrive Suru serves them rice-beer before they begin work Just then, an old Gope lady comes to visit Suru in the hope of having some rice beer She visits Suru often as she stays all by herself in the village In fact, Suru is one of the very few people she visits She has a daughter, who has married a person working in the Noamundi mines Her husband died when her daughter was very young She has no relations to speak of. After her daughter's marriage, she is alone and lonely Suru tries to cheer her up by sharing details of various goings-on in the village. There have been quite a few betrothals and marriages in the village lately All the marriages have been cases of elope Two days back, Shibu, whose mother and sister are helping Suru with the repairs of the roof, got a girl home His mother recounts the entire incident for the benefit of the old lady.

The marriage rituals are to be held in the night accompanied by dance and drinks Suru will make her contribution of providing one pot of rice beer towards the social function organised by any family in the village in keeping with the rule set by the villagers for some years now Since Birsa is not around for most part of the day and, also given his egotistical temperament, Suru has to take on the responsibility of fulfilling social obligations. The main offering in all festivals to the bongo ko (spirits) and guests amongst the Ho is divang (rice-beer). Suru is very proud of the fact that the rice beer prepared by her is always fresh and sweet, unlike the stale and sour rice beer contributed by the other women in the village. It is no wonder that the rice beer prepared by her is sold off in the market before noon by her daughter and son-in-law.

rice-beer takes up a lot of her time, and she is forced to send Meena out to the market every second day to purchase rice

Although she does it for her daughter Padma, she has not reconciled with the way she got married It still hurts to think of how she had walked away from the house disregarding her parents' wishes and at the behest of her lover. It hurts even more to know that she is not happy having had her way For Padma, her situation seems irreconcilable. On the one hand, she is shamefaced for having married against their will and turning to them for financial support Her father has made arrangements for their stay in the railway quarters allotted to him near the station She is disappointed with her spouse for not being able to support her and their child He has a bad drinking problem and ends up drinking more on the days she chooses to nag him for the same On the other hand, she gets extremely upset when her husband is insulted and ridiculed by her father on not being able to support his daughter and granddaughter. Her husband had been asked to leave his house by his stepmother and his father refuses to part with his share of the property. Her husband finds working as a daily wage labourer demeaning and shies away at the thought of it. This exasperates Birsa who sees no harm in manual labour of any kind to earn one's living Given these circumstances, she feels obligated to her parents to the extent that she would not even eat properly on her visits to their place She gives up her reticence in the face of taunts heaped on her by her mother and sister that the disrespect for the food offered may be on account of hidden wealth

Suru's complaint against her daughter is that she is secretive and does not share her tensions and apprehensions with her Initially, Meena had been successful in breaking Padma's silence, but now even she finds it difficult to communicate with Padma. Padma did not appreciate that Meena had divulged the details of their conversations about her marriage to their mother. In fact, it is only then that Suru came to know that Padma was not happy in her marriage and needed help. Padma considers herself lucky to have caring parents, as she knows of a number of *judi* (friends) who have lost all touch with their natal homes owing to a lack of initiative by the latter. However, she has squirmed each time her father has brought this up in front of her. It has burdened her to be told time and again of how privileged she is and to realise that she is incapable of paying back in the least.

For Meena, her sister's situation serves as a living example of what may become of her if she went against her parents' wishes and followed her heart's desire. It is only in the past three to four years that Meena has been living in the village. Earlier, she was staying in the girl's hostel at Jagannathpur, the block headquarters. She decided to come back home

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after she failed to qualify the matriculation examination. In Jagannathpur, she used to like one of her classmates, Mongol He liked her, too He tried to contact her even after she came back to the village. He got a job in the police services right after matriculation. He had proposed marriage to Meena then and another time, after two years. The first time he had asked her to come to the Block, from where he intended to take her home He waited for an entire day, but Meena did not have the courage to walk out of the house A month later, he opted for an arranged match on the insistence of his mother, though he told Meena that he still loved her However, his wife died of an illness the following year He contacted Meena again asking her to marry him. This time he planned to come to her house to take her with him. He decided to visit her house on Baa Parab, the festival that marks the blossoming of the saal (Shorea Robusta) flowers celebrated around the end of March or early April Meena was anxious about his visit Though she was waiting for him, she was also nervous about how she would tell her parents regarding Mongol She was scared as to how her parents would react a second time to a situation Mongol came with a friend around dusk. After exchanging greetings and pleasantries with her parents and her uncle, he looked at her to see if she was ready to leave with him Just then. Meena turned around and went in to the house. She was upset that he came late and that too with a friend whom she did not recognise at all. She knew that had she walked out with him, she would have had to cross the jungle at night to go to his village Mongol left without her

For Meena, as for the villagers, the jungle is the abode of spirits and wild animals Meena has often heard her parents say that, if it were not for the knowledge that they have of the forest and the care they took in pleasing the spirits, they would never have been able to settle a village and have a home They would not have had the security of a home The insecurity of leaving home was accompanied by the fear of the jungle The jungle was not a figure of speech for Meena of the difficult times ahead The fear was real, as she knew what was entailed in making a home in the forest, the hard work involved on an everyday basis. She had seen her mother and other women in the village work relentlessly day and night to sustain a home Maghe Parab would commence the whole process of restoring the home in the forest to protect them from the dangerous spirits and wild animals. The spirits would never let them settle in one place if they are not careful. Out of all the spirits, the most dangerous and malevolent are those that have no home and float through villages from west to east These spirits are of various types and have different names They reside in the forest, mostly in trees Quite often. they enter the village by following a person For as long as they stay in the forest, they inflict illnesses on to the villagers. Her uncle, who had lived in the town for some years, had told her that his life there was easy, one could be cured of any illness by going to the doctor. However, in the village, the spirits would destroy them if they were not particular about pacifying them from time to time. The spirits would never allow them access to the knowledge in the forest, about the diverse kinds of medicines and remedies to illnesses that afflict them regularly. Without the same, they would have been driven out of any village that they settled they would have been homeless.

March is also the time when the *mohua* flowers are bright yellow and ripe with nectar. Unable to bear their weight, *mohua* flowers drop on the forest floor constantly giving the feel of a yellow carpet. The forest echoes with the sound of its falling and reeks of its sweet smell. Birsa owns a few *mohua* trees in the village like other *khuntkattidars* and a few privileged non-*khuntkattidars*. It is common to spot wife/wives and children of the owners collecting *mohua* flowers off the ground. Having decided to remain at home, that is, of deciding against giving up its security for the person she loved, Meena took to the routine the next day as if nothing had happened the day before

Both Suru and Meena got up early that day so as to finish all housework and leave the house to collect mohua flowers. They wanted to collect as much of it as possible before noon, to avoid the afternoon sun They resumed work in the early evening and worked till sunset Having collected mohua flowers, Suru spread them out in the courtyard for drying Till they dry, the daily routine is to put them to dry in the sun This is done all through the year with tamarind, seasonal vegetables like cauliflower and mushrooms In the case of tamarınd, which bears fruit in April-May, it is collected from the trees and most of it is sold off in the market, with only a part of it is stored for consumption. It forms an important ingredient of their ud (mushroom) diet during the monsoons, between the months of June and September For that, the skin of the tamarınd is peeled off, mixed with salt and dried in the sun The seasonal vegetables are cut into small pieces and washed thoroughly before they are put out in the sun for drying Mohua flowers are used for various purposes It is used in medicinal preparations and for making liquor Suru, as in other years, keeps some of it at home for medicinal requirements and sells the rest in the market

In the end of April and first week of May approximately, the manure from the compost pit is transferred to the fields. The last year, it had rained heavily in April. Suru hoped to transfer all the dried manure from the pit to the field before the rains. The work on the fields begins in April after the celebration of *Hermut Parab*, also known as *Baba Parab*. The

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term 'her' means 'to sow, to sprinkle something dry' and 'mut' is used as an affix with the latter to mean the start of the act of sprinkling seeds on the field. The practice is to call on Desauli Mahaburu (the residing spirit of the sacred grove, also the spirit of the village) to oversee the agricultural work and protect the crops from the wrath of the evil spirits and ill-timed weather changes. A cock and a sheep are sacrificed as a part of the ritual. There are three kinds of paddy that are cultivated goda baba, or the paddy grown on upland, pee baba, light paddy grown on the field which cannot retain water for long, beda baba, heavy paddy grown on land that retains water for the longest period of time

The field is prepared before sowing, a task that is usually understood to be done by men, as women are not allowed to plough the land Suru manages most of the work on her own, but depends on hired labour to carry out the task of ploughing The preparation of the field involves removing the weeds and shrubs that have taken root all over it The earth in Ho is called ote. An un-worked field is paadilye ote and a new field is nama ote. The worked-on field is termed as sal, and in some instances, it is also called sal ote. The term sala means to choose or select Sal is thus field in the lowland, which is most suitable for cultivation and thereby select and special. It is also the field that is transformed from nama ote or paadilye ote to sal, that is, from un-worked earth to a fertile field established through labour and ritual Hermut marks the beginning of this cycle of regeneration and transformation.

Suru participates as well as supervises all the work associated with agriculture, from the time of sowing the grains to the process of transplanting and harvesting the crops. In July, *Heroh Parab* is celebrated in which Desauli Mahaburu is propitiated to 'send rain from the west and air from the east and to look kindly upon the family and its livestock' Women mostly carry out the activity of transplanting the saplings of paddy into the water-filled earth. After transplantation, the task is to ensure that grass and other weeds do not thwart the growth of paddy. A ritual called *jomnama* succeeds the harvesting of paddy grown in the upland in September. The freshly cut paddy is offered to the spirits before it is used for daily consumption. The harvesting of the light paddy follows soon after this. There are various kinds of pulses that are grown in the upland such as, *biri* or *ramba*, *balja ramba*, *kuduti*, *kansari*, *maasuri and jayti*.

Finally, by November, it is time to harvest the paddy grown on the beda land, then begins the task of threshing and cleaning the paddy. The hay is collected and is brought to use in various ways. It is used to make bode (long ropes), which are used to make 'baandi' or the pouches to store paddy. The hay that is used to make bode is called pual or

babasingh It is also kept aside as regular feed for cattle through the year as well as used for covering the roof of the house and is called *loto* This activity continues through makar, a festival celebrated by the Gopes to mark the New Year, and till Maghe Parab. Rituals performed by the villagers in their houses precede the main collective function of Maghe Parab

The yearly calendar of the villagers, which charts out the changes in nature along with the work, festivities and rituals that accompany it, is presented in Table 1 The four months of Makar, Maghe, Baa and Gurun Dupul are non-agricultural months during which the villagers undertake activities such as construction and repair of houses, pressing oil from kusum, karani and neem seeds, collection of fuel-wood from the forest, visiting relatives and fixing betrothals and marriages Mohua and tamarınd are also collected and stored in these months. It is during these months that vegetables are grown and stored for consumption in the months characterised by heavy work in the fields. It is a break from the work in the fields, but is characterised by work in the forest and on the house Thus, work and rest are relative terms, in that a rest in relation to work in the field characterises work in the forest. However, these are also months, during which the villagers prepare and equip themselves for the monsoons and months of laborious work in the field The calendar then is illustrative of the interconnectedness of nature with culture as well as how both are integrated into a way of life, wherein it is difficult to elucidate the role of one in their lives without giving details of the other

A Place of One's Own: Women's Work and the Home

The reference to the term 'home' in the paper does not imply a four-walled structure alone, it stands for a human being's address or a place in the world she inhabits. For women, home is not permanent, it is a transitory category. They are raised with the knowledge that the home they care for day after day is not theirs. After marriage, they are strangers to the house they move into and therein they begin a whole new process of embracing new surroundings, people and a way of life. They don't inherit homes, they make them. They invest their labour and their emotional and mental resources in its creation. The value of a home, therefore, is that much more for a woman in as much as it is also a source of insecurity. This reality of women's life of impermanence in the context of a home is what can be termed as a form of 'crossing', which is an opening rather than a closure through which women experience the world.⁵

Table 1 The Twelve-Monthly Calendar

Chandu	Notine Culture
(Month)	Nature\Culture
Maghe Chandu	The month known by the most popular festival of the Ho, namely, Maghe Parab It marks the beginning of a new year of work in the fields and repairs, renewals and construction of houses in the village
Baa Chandu	Baa means a flower and it is in this month that Baa Parab or the festival of flowers is celebrated to mark the blossoming of Sal Mohua also flowers in this month and the villagers get busy in collecting mohua from the forest bed
Guruu	Gurun translates in Ho as cow dung Dupil means 'to carry on the
Dupıl Chandu	head' In this month, most of the villagers transfer cow dung, stored over months in the pits near their houses, to the fields as manure. This marks the beginning of the preparation of the fields for cultivation. Tamarind also ripens in this month and the villagers collect and dry it.
	in the sun for use during the monsoons. Some of the villagers also sell it in the local market
Baba Her	Baba refers to paddy and her is 'to sow or sprinkle' It is in Baba Her
Chandu	Chandu that paddy cultivation begins and it is marked by Baba Hermutu festival, in which a sacrifice is made to the spirits for a good monsoon before sowing the main crop
Kanaıl	This month marks the arrival of the monsoons in its entirety Nail is the
Chandu	Ho word for a plough and it is in this month that the ploughing of land is undertaken. The staples of the villagers through the rainy months are mushrooms that sprout all over the fields and forests.
Rowa Chandu	Rowa means 'to transplant, to plant in to water filled earth with the hand' The villagers transplant paddy into the field during this period A ritual called hero parab is performed to the spirits once the sowing is completed
Hey Chandu	Hey in Ho means to puck whole leaves, it also refers to the chaff or husks of grains. The villagers remove grass, chaff and weeds that grow in the field that thwart the growth of paddy during this month
Jomnama Chandu	This month is named after the festival celebrated before the first fruits of harvest of the crop grown in the upland are eaten. The festival is a form of thanksgiving to the spirits for allowing them to cultivate and harvest the crop without any hindrance.
Pee Baba Ir Chandu	Pee Baba is the paddy grown in the upland, ir is 'to cut' It is in this month, after the celebration of jomnama, that the paddy of the upland is harvested
Beda Baba Ir Chandu	During this month, the paddy of the beda land is harvested
Busu u Kuta Chandu	Busu translates as straw, kuta means 'the foot' In this month, the husked paddy is beaten and worked on by the oxen in the threshing floor known as kolom
Makar Chandu	Makar Sankrantı is the festival of Gopes and marks the beginning of the new year of the Oriya community. The month is known by this festival. This also marks the beginning of the winter months when the villagers maintain gardens and grow seasonal vegetables, which is then dried in the sun and stored for consumption in the rainy months.

On marriage, Suru moved out of a home that no longer belonged to her, she moved into a home that was alien to her and ridden with conflict and dissension. This too, she realises, is not rightfully hers as her husband can claim it any day to get his third wife to stay with him. Yet, what indeed belongs to her is the capacity to build a home through her hard work and that alone provides her with a sense of self-worth and respect. Padma, much as she might like to, cannot rightfully return to the 'security' of her parents' home. She cannot rid herself of the feelings of gratitude and obligation that haunt her each time her parents help her. Meena also knew that had she walked out of her home the day her lover came to take her with him, she could never return to its warm enfold.

Similarly, homecoming is not a return of a person, who goes astray, wanders off a forbidden path. This definition assumes an omnipresent home, a place of comfort and rescue. Homecoming, as understood here, is not a return to a presupposed sense of certitude or security associated with the 'home'. Homecoming, then, is never a return to an omnipresent home, but a process of establishing a home and working towards its renewal and restoration. In this sense, women are not delimited by the confines of a home or by the supposed 'security' it offers. Its contours are set by women through their work and labour in order to secure their place in society. Homecoming is the culmination of the process of establishing a 'home' in the forest year after year and thereby securing a place in the community for themselves.

In the context of the village too, homecoming is not a return to certitude, but the act of building a 'home' in the forest Homecoming, as is commonly understood, would imply a return to the uncertainty and insecurity of the forest for the villagers. It would entail betraying and abandoning the ancestors to the mercy of the evil spirits that roam the jungle and putting the present and the future generations in danger. This would also amount to a breach of faith towards the spirit world, in traversing the boundary between humans and the spirits. Homecoming is the celebration of the process by which the forest, an otherwise uninhabitable space, is transformed into an inhabitable one. It is a celebration of the success in building a 'home' in the forest. Maghe Parab is a collective commemoration of homecoming in the forest. It celebrates the success in sustaining and reproducing the home in the forest as well as restates its resilience to restore the 'home' in the following year.

Women's work is fundamental in establishing and renewing the special relationship to land and forests in the village, wherein it is difficult to separate economic labour from the symbolic capital that goes in to maintaining a home and the community. How could, then, homecoming be complete without recognising the persons responsible for

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maintaining a home? Meena, Padma and Suru's fears are inconsistent with their role in building a home. Land rights to women would help in overcoming this ambiguity in women's lives and also reinforce the grounds for homecoming in the forest. Concomitantly, the campaign for land rights for women should redress the popular notion of the home, in which the latter is not seen merely as a site of oppression but also of self-determination.

Land and forest are not held in esteem only for their material worth The term 'belonging' takes on a larger meaning Land and forests are the media through which the villagers relate to the phenomena of life and death and deliberate on who they are and what is to become of them It is this that sets it apart from the scientific, modern management of forests Thus, the issue is not only about how much labour women put in on land and in the home, but also the kind of labour involved There is a particular kind of relationship set with humans, land and the forests, wherein the boundary of each is maintained

In securing a home, Suru restores the sacred and the mundane of every day life and consequently provides the basis of community life itself. Not only are the duties with regard to the spirits and ancestors fulfilled, but also those towards relatives in other villages, the villagers and family. She carries out the responsibility of socialising her daughters and son to the community life and living. She reaches out to her daughter Padma at her time of crises and difficulty. Her attempt at securing a home and a sense of self, therefore, includes the family and community life and is not set apart from it. It is inclusive and all embracing. The home, therefore, cannot be set against the world, as a closure and in opposition to the ways of the world.

Ho Women and Land Rights: The Crossfire

The issue of women's rights on land among the Ho came up before the formation of Jharkhand, at a time when the movement was trying to strengthen its base by forging a collective identity within tribes and of all tribes in the area. A woman activist, who filed a case in the Supreme Court demanding land rights for Ho women, brought it up for debate ⁶ This sparked off tensions in the area, and lent itself to a long-standing debate over the intention behind it ⁷ Conferences, debates and discussions were organised to clarify reservations to an issue that, in principle, seemed proper and just. Presented here are the main arguments for and against granting land rights to women ⁸

A main reservation with the Bill was that it would lead to the disintegration of the community Since the Ho are patrilineal and virilocal,

and women are constantly on the move through marriage, the argument is that land rights to women would be meaningless as they would not stay at a place in order to cultivate the land they claim. On the other hand, if women do decide to stay back to exercise this right, it would lead to confusion in the existing system of marriage and descent and lead to the break up of the patrilineage, on the basis of which all Ho villages have been settled. The existing pattern of landholding, it is argued, encourages social ties of the patrilineage (killi) whereas the proposed bill would undermine it. The latter would lead to fragmentation of land and the disintegration of the family as a unit

About a Rajasthan village, Rajni Palriwala (1999) has observed that, with the growing demand for labour due to the out migration of men, there has been a demographic shift in the village and changes in kinship practices. More and more married women return to their natal homes to assist during the agricultural season and that there has been a reduction of the distance between women's natal and conjugal residence over the years. This questions the assumption that once married, women are fixed residents of their conjugal homes, and allays the fear that property rights to women and their consequent mobility for managing agricultural work on land will lead to the disintegration of the family as a unit

The experience of villages in West Singhbhum is similar in that many khuntkattidar men have taken up jobs in the railways and the numerous mines that have mushroomed all over the district Many of them prefer to stay at their place of work than commute long for work everyday. The responsibility of agricultural work then falls primarily on women. The case presented in this paper then is not an exception to the rule, but illustrates the norm. In such a scenario, women's regular presence is what sustains work on land and the domestic unit within the village. In fact, it is men's mobility that threatens the survival of the domestic unit and agricultural work. In many households in the village, young unmarried daughters as well as married daughters supervise agricultural work and contribute their labour towards their natal home.

Those arguing against the bill assume that women, in all probability, would claim land if they were provided with the right through law. This need not necessarily be the case, though the fear over the same suggests the ludicrousness of not exercising the right on land if women are provided with it. There are several arguments posited as reasons for women's restraint in exercising the right to property, fear of ostracism from the community is one of them. Such explanations fall short of analysing the women's point of view, as they only engage in an analysis of the consequences that might accrue in exercising the right to property by women. Similarly, arguments in favour of land rights for women are

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garbed in the same vocabulary, which present similar rationalisations to make a case for women's financial and economic independence (see Kishwar 1987) For instance, property rights for widows and unattached women are justified on the ground that they lack the support of a man in their lives. Here, property is a substitute for man, and, in this sense, both land and man are in conflict over maintaining women. Women are 'objects' in relation to man and property. Property is seen as that which would enable women to seek economic, social and political independence, as against women facilitating the proper utrlisation of property by exercising their rights on land

Gender inequalities are built into inheritance laws in India This is especially apparent in inheritance laws of agricultural land (Agarwal 1999) The Government of India Act of 1935 has vested all legislative powers regarding agricultural land to state legislatures With independence, this power was more or less restored, with the restriction that any subject falling within the Concurrent List of the Constitution and that which has already been passed by the Parliament cannot be passed in the state legislature without the consent of the President of India This, for one, accounts for the regional disparity on laws over women's inheritance of agricultural land But, most significantly, it has deterred state legislatures from amending Hindu Succession Law for owned agricultural land, thereby preventing state legislatures from passing a bill against women's inheritance of agricultural property (for example, the 1969 Punjab Assembly decision and the 1979 Haryana Assembly resolution) Even though favourable laws for women's accession to agricultural property exist in certain states, women are very low down on the list of inheritors In states where such laws exist, they are qualified by restrictions wherein a woman loses rights on agricultural property on remarriage, a failure to cultivate the land over a specified period of time and upon her death such that her legal heirs have no rights on the property and it is transferred to the heirs of the last male landowner

This clearly reflects biases in the legal definition of the 'family' which discriminates against women and treats them as appendages rather than rightful partners in the composition of a family. The legal rights that accrue to them, therefore, seem more like concessions and privileges than a legal recognition and acknowledgement of women's work on land. It repudiates women's work on land, an aspect that resets gender inequality through law

The campaign for granting property rights to Ho women partakes of similar perceptions of women in relation to family and work, thus failing to challenge what lies at the core of women's empowerment. Unless the fundamental bases for discrimination against women are not addressed in

the campaign for granting property rights to Ho women, that is, devaluation of women's work and their position in the family, the demand for property rights to Ho women would be misconstrued as an attempt to weaken the Jharkhand movement by promoting disunity between Ho men and women over the issue of land rights

This also raises issues of theoretical and methodological significance in connection with women land rights. The terms 'family' and 'household' have been regularly examined as units of sociological analyses, especially in the context of devaluation of women's work as well as the non-recognition of women's labour in the household (Shah 1973 and 1998, Saradamoni 1992). On the one hand, the term 'family' has been dissociated from the term 'household' in that the household is the residential unit or the living arrangement of the family (Shah 1973). On the other hand, the census operations have not paid much attention to the two terms and have restricted its utility to data collection for population surveys (Rao 1992). The two terms have been used interchangeably

Either way, the conceptual differences have not contributed favourably towards recognition of women and women's work. The separation of the term household and family might have helped in recognising and documenting the various changes in the constitution of a household in or over a region, caste and community, but has retained the patriarchal definition of a family thereby reducing the former as a deviation vis-à-vis the latter. The household as a practical variant of the category 'family' poses no threat through its findings to the structural definition of the family, as a patrilineal, patrilocal unit, under a patriarchal head with all ritual, social and economic rights vested in the male members. 'The law is concerned primarily with the constitution of the property holding group and with the persons having rights of maintenance from the property-holding group, and not with the constitution of the household group' (Ibid. 55)

Another fear of the Ho is that their women, who are illiterates and as a consequence 'naive', are easily susceptible to the connivance of the 'non-Ho' men. The 'non-Ho' men may lure Ho women into marrying them with the intention of usurping land. This would aggravate the tensions between Ho and the non-Ho and lead to the exploitation of Ho women. The non-Ho men may harass Ho women for land and later abandon them, once they get control over land. The non-Ho may even indulge in bride burning to get their way. However, the question that remains unanswered is as to what keeps Ho women 'true' or 'loyal' to their community even though they have no legal rights. If the answer is the financial and social insecurity of moving away, then the granting of land rights to women might even strengthen women's 'loyalty' to the community.

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These arguments are, however, flawed in their very core The naiveté associated with women is also reflective of the way the home is conceived. The home is set against the public sphere or community life, and women as its key inhabitants are supposedly cut off from exchanges beyond its confines. These arguments are also based on the principle of mistrust, and they construct Ho women as the 'homogenous' other with respect to the community. The community here refers to the men as against women, it is exclusive and not inclusive of women. An understanding that fails to break away from this essentially asymmetrical and marginalising relationship between men and women cannot in any way represent women's voices and positions on the matter. At the root of it is a denial of the power of discretion in women, and an assumption that they are incapable of thinking for themselves.

Conclusion

This paper has presented another way of addressing the issue of land rights for women which breaks away from the stalemate presented by the arguments discussed in the previous section. The attempt was to make a case for women's right on land by describing the practice of everyday life, work and ritual in a Ho village through a case study The intention was to show women's role in sustaining the knowledge systems and the way of life, which establishes a more humble relationship with nature Women's work on land and forests helps bear form to the alternative that the movement so vociferously defends and celebrates. However, the debate over land rights to Ho women does not adequately recognise this contribution of women, nor does it realise the consequences of the same The denial of land rights to women is premised on the under evaluation of women's skills on land and forests This upso facto undermines the practices around land and forests, which forms the grounds for homecoming in the forest and is the fundamental rally point of the Jharkhand movement. Consequently the assertion of self-rule or the reinstatement of the claim of the movement of possessing a more humble and egalitarian relationship with nature as against that of the modern, scientific one cannot begin without acknowledging the role of women in its creation.

The self-determination of women is, thus, simultaneously a claim of possessing a more humble and a humane relationship with nature and an assertion of self-rule. Therefore, the fear that granting land rights to women will lead to the disintegration of the community is misplaced. It would redefine gender relations and readjust social relations in favour of women, a phenomenon that will only strengthen the 'home' by recognising women's effort and labour in building it. It is crucial that women are

included as important contributors in this endeavour, failing which the dissent and resistance of the Jharkhandis would end up as another orthodoxy-in-the-making

Notes

I am thankful to Professor Virginius Xaxa, my doctoral supervisor, for his guidance and observations on the earlier draft of this paper, the anonymous referee for her/his prompt response and detailed comments on the paper, and Ms Alpana Thadani for her help in typing the paper

- The most characteristic feature of everyday life as explicated by sociologists such as Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz is that it is experienced as an inter-subjective world. It is a world of shared meanings, 'known and knowable in common with others' (Zimmerman and Pollner 1971–84). According to Don H. Zimmerman and Melvin Pollner, 'everyday activities and their perceived connected features present themselves with the promise that they may be understood and acted upon in practically sufficient ways by competent employment of appropriate proverbs, paradigms, motives, organisational charts, and the like' (*Ibid*—85). Thus, the practice of everyday life fundamentally relies on this shared knowledge, which allows for suspension of doubt or a taken-for-grantedness in everyday interactions and dealings. In explicating women's everyday life in the forest, the attempt is not only to give details of the shared system of meanings and practices around life and work in the forest, but also to demonstrate the process through which this shared system of knowledge and meanings help constitute a 'home' in the forest, thereby reassuring continuity and permanence of the everyday life (see Schutz 1964).
- 2 The use of 'substantive facts about another culture' to 'probe into the specific facts about the subject of criticism at home' dates back to the works of Margaret Mead (Marcuse and Fischer 1986 138) However, I would like to distinguish between ethnocentrism, an extension of the self in the study of the 'other' and the pursuit of a research question, which concerns the self as much as the 'other' The issue is no longer of 'cultural juxtapositioning' or detailing similarities and differences between cultures (*Ibid*), but how the study of the 'other' helps us in achieving greater understanding of common concerns of environmental degradation, self-rule and gender equity
- Interestingly, the general criteria of classification for the wide variety of green leaves, mushrooms, vegetables, etc found in the jungle and the village are based on resemblances and analogy as well as on its use in daily life, thereby reiterating the important role of women in sustaining the process through which such knowledge has been accumulated and preserved. To quote Michel Foucault, 'in every culture, between the use of what one might call the ordering codes and reflections upon order itself, there is the pure experience of order and of its mode of being' (1973 xxi). Thus, the everyday experience of nature is intricately tied to the question of origins and the creation of the universe. The substance and form of classification or the ability to judge and decide what resembles and is a resemblance of in nature are based on the learning and knowledge of nature. Among the Ho, this relatedness of things in nature is therefore not only reflective of their observation of nature, but also of their understanding of Creation itself. Women, therefore, are not only the custodians of this knowledge, but also of the order that encases this knowledge.

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4 The preparation of rice-beer takes three days. The rice is first cooked and then spread out on a *jaati* (mat) to cool. The mat is made of a special grass found in the jungle and is also an important article in Ho marriages.

- 5 The reference here is to the feminist divide between the private and the public domain, the home and the community/market, wherein the private and the home are seen as the sites of oppression or nurturance by radical and ecofeminists respectively. The attempt here is to move beyond these dichotomous understanding of the home, which forecloses a diversity of experiences, besides presenting the category 'home' as a ubiquitous and a preset category. The 'home' is a site through which women experience the world, both the so-called private and public domains of life, and it is both a source of security and shelter, on the one hand, and of vulnerability and difficulty, on the other.
- 6 See Ahuja (1997 211-14) for details of the Public Interest Litigation filed by Madhu Kishwar against the State of Bihar challenging Sections, 7, 8 and 76 of the CNT Act of 1908, which determines land holding pattern in the area
- Many in the area viewed this move as an attempt to weaken the movement at a time when alliances were being sought across class, tribe and gender. This raises the sensitive question as how to address issues of exploitation and injustice in marginalised communities or 'other' cultures without alienating them and their cause further. Then again, how does one present a case for property rights to Ho women with a view to strengthen the claim of the Jharkhand movement of possessing an alternative to the exploitative forms of modern ecological management? The question is as much a methodological one as it is political.
- 8 The arguments against the bill have been largely drawn from my interactions with social activists and intellectuals in Jharkhand I also summarise the observations of some of the speakers in a two-day seminar on whether Ho women should be given property rights in Kolhan held in Tata College, Chaibasa on 20-21 December 1996

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Globalisation at the Crossroads of Tradition and Modernity in Rural India

Kirk Johnson

This paper explores the ongoing structural and cultural changes in a number of mountain villages in Western India more than a decade since the liberalising of the economic markets, which opened the subcontinent even further to the globalising forces of consumerism and materialism In addition to mass communication that includes television, other developments, such as transportation, agricultural systems and education, have all contributed significantly to a fundamental reorientation of village life in the past two decades. The present research suggests three central processes at work in rural India today First, the ethos of consumerism has reached an all time high Second, information technology and mass communication are connecting villagers to each other and to the global market of ideas and information Third, while the impact of certain western notions of life and relationships as well as some aspirations and expectations are beginning to take hold, traditional agrarian society in this region remains resilient in the face of many modernising forces Villagers appear to distinguish between modernity (improving quality of life) and westernisation (rejecting certain values, ideas and cultural practises)

My first morning back in Panchgani, a small town in the mountains of Western India, proved to be an eye-opener. After my early morning run and hot cup of *chai* at the roadside stand, I walked through the bazaar greeting old friends. Shahir, the *patil* (village headman) of a nearby village called Danawli, approached me with open arms, and we inquired about each other's families. One of the most supportive during my doctoral fieldwork almost a decade earlier, Shahir works as a farmer in Danawli, travelling every morning to Panchgani to sell his milk. In addition to his work as *patil* and farmer, Shahir is known in the region for his singing of traditional *bhajans* and poetry. He tells me that he had written to me some time ago but did not have my mailing address. Then he proceeded to ask me a question that came to epitomise the change that has occurred over the past decade in this mountainous region of Western Maharashtra 'Why don't you just give me your E-mail address, that

would be easier?' This man, who grew up in a village where cows are kept in an adjoining room in the house, where roofs are made of tin and thatch and floors of dried manure, where meals are cooked over a wood fire, and fields are ploughed using bullocks as in ages past, has had no difficulty understanding the concept of the Internet and global communication and uses it to his benefit. This was my introduction to rural India in the twenty-first century

In this paper, I attempt to capture the changes that have occurred in this part of South Asia more than a decade since the liberalising of the economic markets, which opened the subcontinent even further to the globalising forces of consumerism and materialism. This paper is an update of my ethnographic fieldwork that took place here in the mid-1990s on the influences of television in rural life (Johnson 2000). At that time, television had just taken hold in this region, and its influences were just beginning to be felt. It now appears that television, though an important tool of cultural influence, is only one among many media of mass communication and information technology that are permeating the material as well as the social and cultural fabric of rural society. Aided by other developments like roads, transportation, agricultural systems and education, village life has undergone a fundamental reorientation in the past two decades.

The present research, based on in-depth interviews and observations during the monsoon months of 2003 in a number of small villages throughout the mountainside surrounding Panchgani² in the state of Maharashtra, suggests three central processes at work in rural India First. the ethos of consumerism has reached an all time high. Villagers are now more a part of the global market place than ever before Second, information technology and mass communication are connecting villagers to each other and to the global market of ideas and information. Third, while the impact of certain western notions of life and relationships as well as some aspirations and expectations are beginning to take hold, traditional agrarian society in this region remains more resilient in the face of many modernising forces The threat to regional cultures due to forces of globalisation remains complex, especially in terms of language survival Villagers seem to welcome technology that can contribute in some real way to their quality of life, while adhering to the fundamental cultural norms, traditions and ways of life that define rural society in the ghat villages which surround Panchgani Each of these processes is fundamentally interconnected, yet in this paper, I will explore each independently

Methodology

During July and August of 2003, I visited five small villages in Wai and Mahabaleshwar talukas in the Satara district of Maharashtra. I interviewed a total of twenty-three informants in these villages, with the average interview lasting approximately two hours. Several informants were interviewed three to four times. Gender distribution was even, and most respondents were farmers, with the exception of three who worked in the local towns and four who were retired or worked minimally. Most were of Maratha caste, and five were from the Neo-Buddhist community (or the scheduled caste). This region of Maratha people—Satara—only 50 km away. All but one of the five small villages was predominantly of Maratha caste with Rajpuri having a small ex-untouchable community of about thirty households.

Interviews were open and unstructured, with the central question focusing on both structural and cultural changes that have occurred over the past two decades in the village community. Interviews took place mostly in people's homes, but a few were conducted outside while people worked in the fields Rarely were interviews conducted with only the respondent present, there were often children present and sometimes other adults who occasionally contributed to the interview, and this was treated as data as well. Quantitative data was gathered in terms of the level of technological advancement in each village, including such measures as the number of telephones and televisions as well as the timeline for the introduction of a variety of developments including roads and electricity. Most data, including interviews and observations, was qualitative in order to present a decentralised perspective that includes 'deep descriptions' (Geertz 1973) from local communities about their relationship to each other and to the world around them

The New Ethos of Consumerism in Modern India

In 1995, on a wall outside the Department of Sociology at the University of Delhi, I read the following words in graffiti 'We don't want Coke and MTV, we want jobs' At that time, I had just come to India to begin studying the cultural impact of television in remote mountain villages in Maharashtra I was struck by this phrase that said so much about what the realities of life in India were for a student at the University In 1991, the India government began the process of opening up the markets to global trade and commerce This liberalising process accelerated the interaction of the Indian people with global forces of consumption

Within a short time, Indians began to have increasing access to consumer goods that were once only dreamed of At first, many of these foreign products were too expensive, but as they and competing local products became more readily available prices began to fall A number of collaborations between multinationals and local corporations put in the market-place affordable goods, from cars and mobile phones to televisions and computers

It was at this time that television became an important agent of cultural influence that contributed directly to the acceleration of consumption Both radio and television are not new to the Indian landscape Government control over both began very early with both media envisioned as a means by which the government could develop rural regions of India However, with the launching of privately owned AsiaSat-1 in 1990³ and the relaxing of government controls of the market, mass communication including radio and television (and later the Internet) became important sources of information to many Indians and acted as the primary portals of the global culture of consumerism

The process of consumerism, defined by Philip Salzman (1993 7) as the 'cathecting of consumption as an appropriate orientation', has now permeated much of rural Maharashtra Throughout the 1990s, as villages moved into more cash-based systems of production, consumer goods have become more accessible Goods such as televisions, electric fans and irons, motorcycles, telephones, VCD and VHS players are becoming more common in village homes Walking through the village today one would notice television antennae, satellite dishes, telephone connections and various transportation vehicles that were only ten years ago out of reach for most

The role of advertising is critical in promoting this new ethos of consumerism Doordarshan's airing of *Hum Log in* 1986 marked the first time the advertising community began to understand the potential of television as a medium to reach millions in India. This show 'carried a message of modernity centring on the nuclear family, with two children, and aspirations for a better life through education and more consumer goods' (Page and Crawley 2001–154). Consumerism was beginning to be unleashed and, by the mid-1990s, it was roaring full speed ahead Advertising had taken hold of television and was garnering a greater share of the audience. Today, Doordarshan, especially its Hindi and local satellite channels, is seen as the obvious choice due to its extensive reach to the nethermost regions of the subcontinent (*Ibid*.) More villagers are watching Doordarshan because of its modern focus on entertainment fare,

which it has had to adopt to stay competitive in the open market of satellite television

As India welcomed the modern forces of global capitalism, the local markets began to recognise the problem of capitalism in a much deeper way than ever before For commodities to lead to profits they must go through the circuit of production, distribution and consumption The problem of capitalism that Sut Jhally (1998) outlines is not of production, but of consumption It is precisely because of the problem of consumption that the role of advertising in the modern world is so critical Advertising is an industry that was invented to promote the consumption of goods and services Hum Log and other such programmes present images and themes that promote consumption and advertisements continually complement those Product placement within programmes has become standard fare. In fact, all the media systems, from radio and television to newspapers and magazines, are dominated by advertising messages One hundred percent of television and radio revenues come from advertising Magazines earn about 50 percent from advertising and 50 percent of subscriptions, while newspapers are about 80 20 in favour of advertising Jhally (Ibid) argues that we have turned our media systems into vehicles for selling goods and services Therefore, to understand culture and cultural change, one must understand the role of media and thus advertising in our lives However, it is not my purpose here to carry out an in-depth analysis of media advertising in modern India (see Rajagopal 1999, Mazzarella 2003) nor to critically theorise the impact of advertising on social change I do feel it is important, however, to illustrate the fact that the rise in consumerism cannot be understood without understanding its linkage to advertising especially on television in rural India

The story of advertising is closely linked to the question of happiness. Every society has established stories about happiness. In this part of rural India, happiness has always been linked to one's relationship to one's family, to one's faith, and to one's work. Advertising tells a different story. It tells us that the only way to happiness is through the consumption of goods. Jhally (1998) has showed this to be true in the United States of America, and the same is to be found in the villages of Western Maharashtra. In fact, each ad on TV tells us that the only way to happiness and satisfaction is through the accumulation and consumption of objects. Drink a Coke and you will be happy. Wash your clothes with a particular detergent, and your husband will love you. From soap to alcohol, from hair removal cream to exercise equipment, the message is always the same happiness is gained through the purchase and consumption of objects. It is this story that happiness comes from the market,

from economic growth, that is in fact the major motivating force for social change on a global scale as we head into the twenty-first century' (*Ibid*)

Throughout my interviews, I continually heard two opposing responses in terms of advertising Some believed that advertising informed them of things that the market can provide which can make them happy

You see Kirk Baba, sometimes we see things on TV and they are good So I try sometimes to save and then when I have enough to purchase them Like this Hero Honda motorcycle I have My son loved the advertisements, and when we were thinking about getting one, he wanted the particular one he saw on TV

According to one woman

My children always see things they want on TV, so when I have enough money I go to Panchgani on Wednesdays (market day) and see if I can find it in the shops

Others believed that advertising and media in general were destroying traditional structures and relationships in the village community

These kids nowadays only want what they see on TV I think this is not good, because we are poor, but they go to their friend's house and watch TV Then they come home and say they want this and that I tell them we don't have money to buy it, and they become sad I feel bad and then try to find something for them

It is this desire to accumulate goods that drives the market in modern India, and it is this ethos of consumerism that is reshaping rural India

However, like Timothy Scrase (2002), I found that respondents did make certain distinctions between western ideas and modern ways of living Modernity was linked to technological development and scientific advancement. This was seen as a positive thing by all, especially in terms of improving the quality of life. However, 'western' was associated with values and morality, and it was this that respondents often were unhappy about. The older generation was especially vocal about this process taking hold in rural areas. Promiscuity, alcohol consumption, disrespectful attitudes by some, and a general carefree and irresponsible behaviour toward work and family were among the most pressing social concerns that were linked to 'westernisation'

However, education has been a strong part of modern Maharashtrian history. This and its historic role under the British rule have made the population comfortable with embracing modernity. In fact, this state is probably the most modern in many respects, and the people work hard towards that end. This is why consumerism is not necessarily seen as a negative thing, it is often linked to modernity. However, when consumption is understood within the context of westernisation, village society becomes concerned.

In brief, several factors have contributed to an acceleration of the level of consumption and consumerism at the village level A move into a cash-based economy, privatisation of radio and TV that has led to advertising and product placement, and the role of education in making modernisation desirable have all contributed to the growth of the new ethos of consumerism in village India

Information Technology and Mass Communication

The qualitative and quantitative changes that have occurred at the village level are ubiquitous Shahir now drives his motorbike all the way to town instead of walking to Bhilar (6 km away) to catch public transport to Panchgani. He has been able to purchase another cow, which has increased his milk supply. He watches TV to relax in the evenings and on Sundays, and has use of a home telephone to make calls if he needs to instead of walking to Bhilar. All this has made his life easier at one level, which is an outcome of technology.

However, what of the sociological impact of the past decade? What real socio-cultural changes are observed in the village communities in these mountains? Have the changes in the past ten years had any real sociological and cultural impact on the daily life of these people? The answer in the end was more complex than I anticipated People are more connected to each other than ever before due to transportation and telephones, both mobile and land Television has also had a significant impact in terms of connectivity from an ideological sense Villagers see themselves as part of a larger whole They see themselves as connected to villagers throughout the country

According to one man in his late-30s

I think what has changed in my life is that I am not only focused on my life here in Rajpuri I see people just like me [villagers] in Orissa or Kerala struggling with life or with agriculture, and I feel that I and my family and my village are not alone We have brothers and sisters all over India, and they are struggling with us

They see their own daily struggles as not limited to their own family or village, but something larger. In a sense, television has enabled these villagers to develop a 'sociological imagination' that C. Wright Mills (1959) spoke about half a century ago. They see their personal troubles as connected in some way to larger societal issues. One middle-age man from of the scheduled caste in Raipuri said.

These members of the panchayat are sometimes corrupt just like the Ministers in Mumbai or in Delhi Our problems here in the village are not unique, they are the same problems that the nation is facing Corruption is everywhere

On more than one occasion, villagers remembered the attacks on New York City's World Trade Centre towers, and one commented that he was thinking and praying for my family in America This 67-year old villager was aware of this international act of terrorism and had a deeper insight into its meaning

Before that, I thought we were the only ones who suffered, but now I know we suffer together

Transportation is another important factor that has contributed significantly to change in the daily lives of villagers. A village located 20 km outside Panchgani is now not as isolated as it once was Improved roads and access to affordable and expanded transportation makes it much easier to get around. This together with the television and telephone connections that people are making locally as well as within the state and throughout the country are important factors that have contributed to a shift in the worldview of the average villager planting his rice on the remote mountainside out of touch with the larger global village he lives in

The following examples illustrate how mass communication and transportation have impacted the village, making the villagers' life not only easier and more convenient than before but also more connected to the outside. Lila Bai had a phone installed in her modest home two months before I interviewed her. One morning, as I was talking to her the phone rang and it was a call from her son in Mumbai saying that he had been in an accident. She immediately made plans to travel to be with him I gave her a ride back to town where she boarded a bus. From the moment she got the call to her arrival at her son's bedside at the hospital in the city only lasted eight hours. In the past, it would have taken a great

deal more time and energy. It might have been days before she even knew about her son's condition

Another example happened when my wife and I were invited one evening for a welcoming ceremony in Danawli We arrived at about 7.00 p.m. and the villagers congregated for an evening of singing *bhajans*, dinner, and visiting Late that evening it was pouring rain, and we managed to drive home safely in our rented jeep. The next morning I was summoned by our hotel's manager telling me someone had come to see me. I went outside and saw that it was Shahir who had come to say that in the early morning hours the villagers had awoken to find a huge boulder, which had rolled down the mountainside and wedged itself onto the road. He rode his motorcycle into town to make sure we had arrived safely home, and he asked to use the phone to call his wife in the village to let her and everyone else know we were fine. Communication that would have taken hours and sometimes days is now almost immediate, and this has changed how villagers see themselves and their connection to the outside world.

Television also plays a role in the transformation of the physical environment in the village. Informants commented on several occasions that television has influenced how they see their environment and their homes It was not uncommon to see villagers growing roses outside their front door and manicuring their shrubs and flower gardens Media messages have improved the sanitation in the villages, many villagers now have latrines next to their homes, eliminating the need to use the nearby fields Many reported that women no longer give birth in the village but instead go to town to see a doctor The village medicine man is now only used for minor sicknesses and ailments. Most village schools have improved equipment and better-trained teachers; one school in particular (Bhose village) has established a computer lab with fifteen terminals all with Internet access. This is unique in the area and is the result of a resident working with a non-governmental organisation to secure funds to purchase the terminals. The lab is financially selfsufficient and is primarily used by students in the village school

A central question in all my interviews centred on the change that has occurred in the lives of villagers. I often asked young men and women to reflect on how their lives are different from that of their parents. I was interested in exploring how the increase of technology and mass media in the village has impacted the villagers who are now more connected to the forces of globalisation and capitalism than ever before. According to one 20-year old man from Bhose village

My life is very different from my father's in some ways. You see I have Internet access I communicate with people all over the world from Mexico to Africa I have a good job at this school, though I do help with the I have no desire to leave my village, I like my life here I want to marry and have children I do not watch a lot of TV, but what I do watch I like very much I like watching the news and some serials Sometimes movies are good What I have in my life right now, how I see the world and what I want in life is not that much different from the past Sure I have all these things that my father never had and they are good, but I am still living in Bhose, I still help with the agriculture on my family's land, I still respect my elders, my parents, and my father will arrange for me to be married in a few years I will raise my family here and my children will go to school here I will take care of my parents when they get old What is different is that I see myself as part of something greater than Bhose, I know what is happening in the world, both the good and the bad I like some things, like mobile phones and Internet, but do not like other things like the violence and crime that we see on TV Bhose is a quiet place, and though some have to go to out to work (both locally and in cities like Mumbai and Pune) to support their families they would rather stay here Village life is more peaceful

Another woman from Danawlı commented

You see nowadays people have adopted some modern manners or customs Like some clothing or some ideas, like love marriage. These are not so bad What is bad is what television shows every night in the serials, when married people are having affairs or a young boy or girl is sharing a bed

When further probed about love marriage, this woman commented

You see love marriage is not our tradition Arranged marriage is our custom. The parents find a girl for their son and the son respects their decision. But if they love each other that is even better. If the son says that he would rather have so and so, that is ok too. Maybe they already like each other. But the respect for the parents is there. Love is ok as long as the parents agree. Just last month Dilip married a girl that he met at the jatra [village fair] and they liked each other and he asked his parents to arrange it and it was good.

In the age of telecommunications and mass media, village society is no longer isolated from the happenings around it Roads and transportation have connected villagers to the economic markets beyond their immediate boundaries However, with the introduction of television, telephone and the Internet, villagers' worldviews are not limited to their immediate

concerns but are widened to include the struggles and realities of people all over the world

Globalisation and Traditional Peasant Society

If politics is about who gets what, cultural politics focuses on who is who, and what he or she is worth at any given time (Rudolph 1992). In India, in the new millennium, cultural politics rests on issues of identity, esteem, honour and the fear of cultural extinction or homogenisation. Any sociological analysis of the new India must consider these issues and their roots. The telecommunications revolution that began in 1991 with the opening of the Indian markets raises questions about these issues.

Two scenarios dominate the discourse on the cultural consequences of globalisation. The first centres on the fear of cultural homogenisation, and the second on the cultural fragmentation and intercultural conflicts, that can result from these modernising forces. Both scenarios are evident to some degree in the new India. First, people from Mumbai and Delhi, especially the burgeoning middle class, eat Maharaja Macs and Kentucky Fried Chicken, wear blue jeans and baseball caps, and enjoy the latest music and fashion from abroad. Dating and love marriage is becoming the norm among this group

The flip side of the cultural coin includes the rise of religious nationalism, ethnic and religious conflict and a backlash against the process of 'westernisation' that many see as threatening the traditions and values of ancient Indian culture. The rise to power of the conservative Bharatiya Janata Party government at the national level and the dominance of the Shiv Sena at the state level in Maharashtra during the 1990s are no coincidence in reaction to the liberalising trends in the subcontinent.

However, how useful is this dichotomy to our understanding of the impact of globalisation on agrarian society in contemporary India? Historical processes are important variables in making sense of the present India's colonial past is a salient feature in the shaping of the country's position in the global market and of national identity by a centralised apparatus. Many Asian societies, including India, are grappling with their own crises of identity in this globalised world of ideas and images. National broadcasters of both radio and television 'have not only acted as custodians to national culture [in the past]; they have also seen it as their job to provide a universal service' (Page and Crawley 2001–28)

The New Economic Policy in India marked a radical shift in 1991, opening the national borders to international products, services, and

capital flows, and allowing Indian companies to join in international competition' (Singhal and Rogers 2001 258) This international consumer culture has taken hold in India, first in the urban centres and now in the villages and hamlets scattered throughout the mountainside of the Western Ghats

Yet, through my interviews and my observations, I have found traditional agrarian society to be more vibrant and more resilient than ever The two scenarios of cultural homogenisation and cultural conflict do not appear to hold true in rural India In fact, in the face of globalisation and technological development, the exact opposite is occurring in the countryside

Scenario 1: Cultural Homogenisation vs. Traditional Resiliency

Cultural homogenisation is not to be found in this part of rural India. Through the globalisation of ideas and ways of living, of information and customs, it is believed that a process of homogenisation will begin to occur Benjamin Barber (1992) illustrates this process by using the catch phrases of 'Jihad versus McWorld' Within this argument, the culturally distinct societies of the world begin to be overrun by globally available goods, media, ideas and institutions. Many of these goods and images are produced in the West, and, therefore, globalisation is perceived in terms of westernisation, Americanisation, or what George Ritzer (1996) calls 'the McDonaldisation of society' Distinct cultures in the new global society begin to lose their uniqueness and mirror the cultural aspects of the more dominant cultures that are represented in the new universal market place

Traditional peasant society is resilient in this era of globalisation. In spite of villagers adopting such modern technologies as telephones and televisions as well as logging on to the Internet, villagers still identify themselves as villagers and farmers. In identifying agricultural practices as an example of the age-old traditions of village culture, one man, while standing in a rice paddy after a long hard day of work, said

Kirk Baba, no matter what is happening in the world, no matter who is at war with who, no matter how much money I make selling my strawberries, my family will always plant rice because this is how we live You see even though the rains are not much this year and we have had to plant more potatoes than we would like, we have managed to redirect the water from the stream to the fields to plant rice

When asked how his life has changed over the past decade, this man had this to say

We have a motorbike now Last time you were here we only had a small moped, which was not very good We have a bigger TV and I have put a satellite dish on my roof so we receive both national Doordarshan and metro Doordarshan clearer My son is married now, and he has one girl, and they live with us I have another cow now, which, with the other, two gives me a total of about 20 litres of milk each day So some things are easier, some things are better, but my life is the same as it was 10 years ago I get up every morning, I work in the fields, I go to Panchgani sometimes to do some police business, see some friends, come home for dinner and watch some TV and go to bed

For many peasants life is easier now than it was twenty or thirty years ago. However, many commented that from a socio-cultural standpoint not much has changed for them individually. According to one woman from Rajpuri,

What has changed? I still work in the fields most of the day and cook for my family My children go to school and work hard

She did agree, however, that some changes are taking place.

Now girls go to school more than before and that is one change that is good

A very positive change that has occurred in the past decade is the rise in the number of girls being educated through high school and college. While education for girls is more important today than it once was, village girls still leave their parents' home when they get married, and do not contribute to their parents' future in any real way. Although the boy child is still prized, girls in rural areas are receiving more education than they had previously. In urban India, the girl child is becoming more valuable.

Everywhere the idea is slowly dawning that a daughter is no longer unwanted baggage but a cherished member of the family Against the bleak backdrop of foeticide, baby butchery and skewed sex ratios, it's a quiet but relentless reformation sweeping through [] India (*The Times of India*, Pune, 22 July 2003 5)

When I asked Madhav, a young married man with a one-year-old daughter, whether he wanted any more children he said, 'No, that is enough' I was shocked at his response and so I repeated my question and said, 'You don't want any more children'? Then he said, 'No I don't want any more daughters, but I will try again for a son' Madhav, the youngest in his family, has a great responsibility since his older sister left after her marriage some years ago He understands that he must take care of his parents and wants a son to do the same for him when he is older

A final area that demonstrates the resiliency of traditional culture in the face of globalisation forces is language. Culture is the way we make sense of, and give meaning to the world we live in. One of the central pillars of culture is language. We use language to identify ourselves in the world and relate to one another. Elsewhere, I have argued that the process of globalisation establishes shared meanings that people from diverse cultural backgrounds have for similar experiences and events. Therefore, globalisation allows distinct cultures to share meanings and outlines frameworks by which these meanings are then translated into shared experiences (Johnson 2001. 7)

However, in the age of globalisation, those without power do not have their language and thus their meanings represented. In the words of Yogendra Singh, 'the threats to local and smaller cultural identities [are] due to [the] massification and marketisation of culture' in contemporary India (1995) These smaller cultural groups then turn to dominant culture and language to understand and give meaning to their lives and to understand the world they live in The dominant languages on television in Maharashtra are Hindi and English In Maharashtra, the local language is Marathı, which is taught in public schools. Cable television has a Marathi channel, but most villages do not get cable and are thus left with Doordarshan, which is primarily in Hindi Though one notices villagers adopting both Hindi and English phrases in their speech (like 'love marriage' and 'birthday,' for example), the Marathi language is still very much alive There is, no doubt, that certain changes are occurring in the villages, but the data suggest that people are still holding tightly to traditional beliefs, language and cultural practices

Scenario 2: Cultural Fragmentation vs. Technological Appropriation

The second scenario proposes that globalisation will result in cultural conflict and chaos. The assumption is that when a country like India opens to the forces of modernisation through globalisation it will begin to lose its traditions, its heritage and its culture, and thus there will

emerge a backlash, a reaction against these forces in an effort to try to hold on to the past. The state often regulates the level of foreign influence entering a country. The regulation against satellite television or western music is an example of fear that these forces will erode traditional culture and have dire consequences for society. Iran, for example, has laws prohibiting people from owning satellite dishes in an effort to keep western ideas, images and ways of living out of the living rooms and homes of the average Persian family. The Quebec government in Canada has strict regulations prohibiting the use of English on street signs or billboards in an effort to prevent the French language from being lost. Resistance can also be seen from other groups and sections of society other than government, such as the mass protests against the Miss World beauty contest in Bangalore some years ago.

However, in the villages around Panchgani, instead of resistance and conflict, I witnessed people incorporating global influences and ideas into their daily lives. The anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (1990) argues that people often use foreign goods, images, and ideas to become more like themselves. This process of appropriation was made clear in these villages.

Television ownership is becoming more widespread in rural India every year, as also as access to more channels. In the villages, television ownership is still a source of prestige and status. In a small tribal settlement on the outskirts of Wai, about 300 people live in very poor conditions in a makeshift tent community. They moved there about four years ago and have made it their home, working in town doing odd jobs and seeming barely to scrape by. This settlement does not have running water or electricity, but during my visit, I noticed that one tent had a television antenna coming out of its roof. I was confused as to how they had TV access without electricity. On further investigation, I discovered that the antenna is used as a status symbol even though there is no television connected to it.

In other villages, I noticed that some homes had telephones prominently placed for everyone to see but no connection Again, this was a status symbol Often when I entered a village home the host would go over to the TV and turn it on (sometimes not even in the same room as we were), the TV would remain on while we visited or drank tea and even during interviews, which symbolised that this was no ordinary home but a home with global connections and entertainment

The appropriation of global goods and ideas can be seen in a variety of areas, and 'the intentions of the producers (of goods or ideas) are changed by the people consuming them. This doesn't mean that people are not affected in very deep ways by imports, they are, but it means we

can't be sure in which way' (Breidenback and Zukrigl 1999 2-3) In sum, traditional peasant society is both resilient and adaptive. In the age of globalisation, the scenarios of cultural homogenisation and cultural conflict do not hold true in the study villages; instead, rural societies in these mountains are shown to hold on to traditional values while accepting and appropriating technological advances

Conclusion

The summer months of 2003 were the driest in the past decade People high and low alike were praying for rain and, by mid-June, it finally arrived The monsoons in India are like the breath of life offered to a dying man. It turns the dried caked earth into a vibrant green sea. On the bus from Mumbai to Pune and then up to Panchgani I witnessed farmers in their rice patties (strips) transplanting and preparing their fields. Looking out of the window, not much had changed Besides, the foreign-made automobiles and the occasional hotel up in the mountains, villagers still plant their rice the same way they have for centuries. Men plough the ground using bullocks as their forefathers did, while colourfully clad women, rice saplings in hand, move across the field, planting it with verdant lines of green.

The contrasts in India have never been more stark than today Tradition and modernity are both at crossroads Nothing is out of reach for people in the new India Whether it is Japanese cars, mobile phones or Swiss chocolates, US athletic gear, Internet connections or Italian shoes, Indians today have their choice of almost everything the global market can provide and at a discounted price According to one affluent storeowner in a small mountain town not too far from the study villages.

Television is the new Bible of India, making once taboo subjects now accepted norms which most aspire to Television in India has shifted from being a source of knowledge and information for development purposes into a living serpent in our family rooms and bedrooms I for one have forbidden my family to watch the evening serials (soap operas)

Villagers seem to embrace modern technology, but continue to hold on tightly to traditional values and kinship ties. Individualism is on the rise in terms of consumerism, but collectivist ideals remain strong in terms of family responsibility and kinship obligations

The full impact of modern technologies on rural culture and social structure remains uncertain. The full implication of the accelerated rate of the adoption of technology and mass communication in rural India.

remains to be seen. The notion that forces of modernisation and globalisation continue to erode traditional cultural systems and ways of living is challenged by this research at this time in the study villages. Experience shows that culture adapts to change and struggles to hold on to what it perceives as salient in the face of conflicting values and new social relationships. As the great subcontinent of India forges its way into the new millennium and increasingly makes its mark on the world economic and cultural scene, the villagers on the mountain slopes of Western Maharashtra are themselves struggling to make sense of this new world. With the vast majority of Indians (750 million people) living in villages such as these, it seems justified and indeed necessary for scholars and practitioners alike to continue to pay special attention to the microcosm of rural India and the lived experiences of people who increasingly find themselves players and participants in the global arena of culture and change

Notes

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The origins of my work in these villages date back to my graduate school days at McGill University in Montreal, Canada As a doctoral student striving to pinpoint a research topic that would not only be appropriate to my interests and talents but also timely, I hoped that I would engage in research that would be cutting-edge and in some real way have a positive impact on people. During one particularly cold and dark winter in Montreal, my advisor Dr Donald Von Eschen suggested that I chat with a visiting scholar from India Since I was raised in India and had spent much time there, I wanted to branch out to a different part of the world like Africa or Latin America and, therefore, had consciously resisted research on topics related to the Indian subcontinent However, I did go to meet with this India scholar and we immediately hit it off I felt like I was back home and I had never felt more at ease with any other academic like I did with him. It turns out that he was from Maharashtra, the state where I am from and was very familiar with the particular mountain region where I lived This man was Dr B S Baviskar He impressed upon me the unique insights I might have by studying social change in this remote region of India as both an insider and an outsider He pointed out that a process had begun in India that would revolutionise social life. He was referring to the liberalising of the economic markets in the early 1990s. He suggested that I return to my hometown, Panchgani, and begin studying the impact of mass communication and modern technology on village life. In particular, we discussed the role and influence of television. I took his advice and conducted an ethnographic study which was later published as Television and social change in rural India (Johnson 2000) This was a timely study and the first of its kind on rural India Dr Baviskar visited me in the study village during my fieldwork, and encouraged and supported me as a mentor and a friend I, like so many others, have gained so much from this humble, soft-spoken giant in Indian sociology

- and in the academy in general. Whether it was at a colloquium at a top university in North America, or as the invited speaker to address the plenary session of the British Sociological Association's annual conference, or sitting on the floor of a village hut, Dr Baviskar is himself in every context and seems to touch everyone he comes into contact with. We are all better for knowing him and he continues to inspire and lead us all in his retirement.
- 2 The study villages included Danawli, Rajpuri Dandeghar, Kingur and Bhilar Interviews were also conducted with select individuals in Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani and Wai-larger towns that act as transportation and economic hubs for the smaller villages in the region
- 3 This was the first broadcasting satellite to cover the large Asia Pacific region and was a product of private enterprise operating out of Hong Kong Owned and operated by Mr Li Ka-Shing, the Satellite was available to both government and private broadcasters from Greece and Turkey in the West to Japan and the Philippines in the East It was Mr Ka-Shing's own broadcasting company that began the first broadcasting in the region in the form of Star (Satellite Television Asian Region) TV
- 4 Doordarshan is the government owned and controlled television channel Government initially used this for primarily developmental and educational purposes, but with modernisation and the rise of other competing channels, Doordarshan has had to compete in terms of its programming becoming more entertainment based which has lured more advertising revenue Doordarshan still garners the largest reach in India due to its transponders throughout the subcontinent, which reach deep into the countryside Most villagers still today have only DD1 and DD2 Satellite television is still less accessible than this government station

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Microfinance and Women in Kerala: Is Marital Status a Determinant in Savings and Credit-use?

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Studies on microfinance have highlighted the relation between women and their use of credit Drawing data from 1,116 women members of sixty self-help groups (SHGs) functioning in Kerala, this paper argues that the patterns of savings and credit-use of women in SHGs are related to their marital status. Marital status acts as a determinant in both the savings of the members, manifested in their contribution to the groups and the deposits they accumulate with the groups during the span of their membership, and their credit-use. The difference in the patterns of savings and credit-use due to one's marital status reflects the family responsibilities of the members which they share with their parents or husbands

Microfinance has now been recognised as an effective programme for bringing about socioeconomic changes, particularly among the poor The positive impacts of microfinance on economic growth and social development have also been acknowledged (see World Bank 2000) About eight to ten million households all over the world are being served by some form of microfinance programme and this figure is expected to reach the 100 million mark by 2005 (Morduch 1999 1569-70) As a major programme capable of dealing with problems like poverty and empowerment, it has made rapid strides in several parts of the world Often targeted at poor women, its usefulness in mobilising social capital has been very significant. Evidence suggests that access to microfinance affects the status of women positively and that a direct relationship exists between access to credit and status, both within their families and in the wider community (Hunt and Kasynathan 2001 42) Studies have shown that education, marital status, family background and work status are the determining variables that affect women's occupational earnings and status-attainment level (see Schuler and Hashemi 1994, Copestake et al. 2001, Matin et al 2002, Wydick 2002, Ahmad 2003, Schreiner and Woller 2003,)

Despite a clear relationship between access to credit and increase in the status of women, specific studies of the impact of microcredit on family, particularly in regard to the position of women, are scarce

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Studies often look at the ways loans are spent by women, in comparison with men, who benefit from microfinance programmes N Kabeer (1998), for instance, notes that women tend to spend their income more on household consumption and security-related assets, as against men borrowers who are more likely to invest in productive activities Women. unlike men, allocate their resources in a different way (Goetz and Gupta 1996) The immediate concerns of women are their family needs and therefore consumption is the most urgent and immediate need for them to meet Access to credit enables women to make a contribution to household finances and use loans for more immediate needs such as food and education (Hulme and Mosley 1996, Hunt and Kasynathan 2001) SR Khandekar et al (1998) find that the impact of credit programmes on household consumption is almost double for the women borrowers than the male borrowers B Wydick (2002), studying 239 borrowers in a Guatemalan microfinance institution, observes that the men entrepreneurs who have availed credit for themselves tend to divert a greater percentage of profits to reinvest in their enterprises, whereas their women counterparts allocate a greater share of their profit for food, clothing, health, children's needs and other family expenditure Strong relationship between women entrepreneurial activity and household consumption has also been cited by others as well (see Jiggins 1989, Clark 1991, Pitt and Khandekar 1998)

The above studies, however, consider women in a general sense, rather than based on a classification of their marital status—such as married or unmarried Women are treated more like married women who share the responsibilities of running their households with their husbands Marital status has not been taken into account as a key variable in these analyses. The only exception to this is the study of Copestake *et al* (2001) who, examining microcredit in Zambia, noted that marital status is an important variable and there are significant effects of training and marital status on business profits. Profit growth rate was 26 percent higher for business operators who had a spouse or a stable partner

When women are taken as an unsegregated general category of analysis, the real nature of their financial activities are not revealed clearly. Any analysis which looks at women as a variable categorised on the basis of their marital status is likely to be more insightful than when women are treated as a broad category. It is natural that the married, unmarried, divorced or separated women have dissimilar familial obligations and financial responsibilities in their households which might be reflected in their savings and credit-use. It would be worth finding the ways in which marital status affects women's own savings and credit-use while they work in self-help groups (SHGs). The questions that could be

raised are many Two most pertinent ones are Does marital status show any variation in the patterns of savings and credit-use? Should we treat women SHG members distinctly on the basis of their marital status because they have different needs and responsibilities in the households?

In this paper, it is argued that the patterns of savings and credit-use of women members in SHGs which run microfinance programmes are largely determined by their marital status and family background Marital status is perceived to be a decisive factor in one's savings, credit-use and other financial transactions carried out in the SHGs. The paper examines whether the patterns of savings and credit-use vary in accordance with the marital status of the SHGs members. The paper also looks into the patterns of savings and credit-use as they are related to family obligations of the married which are mirrored in the size of the family, number of children who are attending school (showing the financial responsibilities involved in the education of the children), and the number of adult male and female members (a proxy variable which indicates the familial responsibilities) in the family Using multiple regression analysis, the models of savings and credit-use as dependent variable and marital status as an independent variable, along with control variables such as the size of the family, number of school attending children, and the number of male and female members in the family, are tested

Savings pattern is measured in terms of the total weekly contribution of the members and the savings they accumulate within the groups during the span of their membership Credit-use consists of the total number of loans, the total sum of all loans, the total sum of consumption loans, and the total sum of bank loans availed by the members ¹ The paper is presented in the following sections of methods and data, results, and conclusions

Methods and Data

The data for the paper were drawn from 1,116 members of sixty women SHGs functioning in two districts, namely, Alappuzha and Ernakulam of Kerala State Kerala has for long been the focus of attention of the international community, mainly because of its unique model of development 'Kerala Model',² as is widely known, characterises distinguishing features in literacy, public health, education, longevity, death and birth rates, population growth, sex ratio and mortality rates without economic growth ³ Kerala's achievements are often compared to that of the developed regions in the world ⁴ The Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI), Human Development Index (HDI) and Gender Development Index (GDI) indicate the noteworthy

position of Kerala, not only in India but among other nations. In 1981, Kerala was rated at a PQLI of 82, when that of the USA was 96 Soon, in 1994, when the HDI of the USA was 0 925, Kerala's index came closer to it with 0 775 (Parayil 2000 6)

The SHGs under study were initiated by a prominent NGO called the WIN Society, operating in the Alappuzha district of Kerala ⁵ Widely spread all over the state and serving specific segments of the population with a variety of objectives and programmes, NGOs have been an indispensable part of the developmental process that has taken place in the state ⁶ The WIN Society is one of these NGOs working specifically for the development and empowerment of women

At the time of the study in 2000, there were 190 SHGs functioning under the auspices of the WIN Society They were formed in 1997 or later ⁷ The groups which were formed in 2000 were excluded, as it is too early to make sense of their activities SHGs with a standing of at least one year at the time of data collection were chosen Excluding the SHGs formed in 2000, there were 130 groups which formed the sample frame From among these 130 SHGs (72 in Alappuzha and 58 in Ernakulam).8 sixty groups were selected proportionately (33 from Alappuzha, that is, out of 72 which is 46%, and 27 from Ernakulam, that is, out of 58 which is 46%) The sample consisted of 46 percent of the total 130 SHGs covering almost every second SHGs in the sample. In each group, there were about twenty members The response rate was about 98 percent, totalling 1,116 women members (the unit of the study) With the help of a schedule containing both closed- and open-ended questions, interviews were held mostly at the venues of the weekly meetings of the groups Those who could not be interviewed at the meeting places were contacted later at their respective homes. A group of trained investigators from the WIN society were involved in data collection, which was held during the months of November and December in 2000

Results

The Respondents: Married versus Unmarried

Of the sixty SHGs chosen for the study, thirty-three are from Alappuzha district and 27 from Ernakulam district, with a membership of 587 and 529 respectively. The majority of the groups and members are functioning in the coastal area of these two districts which is known for poverty in the state 9 On average, there are 186 women respondents per SHG within a range of 10-22

Table 1 presents the basic characteristics of the respondents regarding their marital status, age, duration of membership in the SHGs, education, occupation, monthly income, weekly contribution (initial and current) to the groups, members availed loans, number of loans and amounts of loans (total, consumption and bank loans), deposits in the SHGs, and family background The majority are married (89 %), followed by unmarried (10 %) and widows (1 4 %)

The break-up figures of certain key variables for the married and unmarried show significant differences. Compared to married members the unmarried are older by about five years (line 2 of Table 1). The difference in age is the same for the full sample too. Irrespective of the marital status of the members, the duration of membership remains more or less the same, but with a slight edge for the unmarried over the married (line 3). More than half of the respondents (that is, 57%) have primary education (up to five years of schooling) and another one-third have ten years of schooling (high school education). Six percent of the members have gone to colleges or technical institutions upon successful completion of ten years of schooling. More members with primary education and less with high school education are among the unmarried cluster, though the difference is not significant between the married and the unmarried (line 4).

About half of the respondents do not have any income-earning occupation (line 5) More than one-third of them are engaged in small jobs in fishing or are working as daily wage labourers. The occupational groupings do not differ much across the marital categories. The members earn an average monthly income of Rs 423 (line 6) as against the per capita income of Rs 21,916 and Rs 23,020 for the residents of Alappuzha and Ernakulam districts respectively. Married members are the better income earners and are ahead of the unmarried women. The monthly income of the married is more than that of the unmarried and all the members.

Weekly contribution is a requirement not only to become a member but to obtain loans from the group. In the initial stages of the formation of groups, potential members are encouraged to contribute a regular sum to the general fund of the groups. Members are free to contribute the amount they like to the groups, but not less than the stipulated minimum amount. In order to become a member of a group, the required minimum contribution is Rs 10. During the period of their membership, the members tend to pay more than the required initial contribution. As the weekly contribution is likely to change during the membership period, data for two points of time at the time of joining the groups (called 'initial contribution') and at the time of data collection (called 'current

Table 1 SHG Members Their Characteristics

No	Characteristics	All	Married	Unnfairi ed	Differ- ence	N
I	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Marital status (%) #	100 00	88 90	9 70	79 2	1116
2	Mean age of	39 00	-38 40	43 51	5 11	1114
	members***		30 10	1331	311	1114
3	Duration of	2 58	2 58	2 65	0 06	1116
	membership (in years)			2 00	000	1110
4	Education			-		1091
	Primary (%)	57 40	56 30	65 00	8 70	
	High School (%)	37 00	38 20	28 20	10 00	
	College/Technical (%)	5 60	5 50	6 80	1 30	
5	Occupation					1116
	Fishing Related/Wage labour (%)	36 50	35 80	41 70	5 90	
	Government jobs/Retired (%)	0 90	0 90	0 90	0 00	
	Business (%)	6 80	6 90	6 50	0 40	
	No occupation (%)	55 80	56 60	50 90	5 70	
6	Monthly income of the	423 40	426 41	401 78	24 63	594
	members (Rs) **!					
7	Mean initial weekly contribution (Rs) ¹	11 27	11 37	10 20	1 17	1116
8	Mean current weekly contribution**! (Rs)	23 03	23 33	19 77	3 56	1100
9	Loans taken from SHGs (%)	87 40	87 80	83 30	4 50	975
10	Mean number of loans taken	2 39	2 41	2 23	0 19	977
11	Mean number of consumption loans taken	2 22	2 23	2 09	0 14	975
12	Mean number of bank loans taken	1 21	1 21	1 14	0 07	173
13	Mean total loan sum (Rs) *1	5528 19	5662 88	4567 93	1094 95	975
14	Mean total consumption loans **! (Rs)	4456 37	4571 86	3519 23	1052 63	962
15	Mean total bank loans (Rs)	6468 59	6462 75	6535 71	72 96	175
16	Mean total deposit in the group**!	1434 26	1457 56	1271 07	186 49	1106

Table 1 continued

No	Characteristics	All	Married	Unmarried	Differ- ence	N
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	Size of the family	4 78	4 80	4 65	0 15	1100
18	Mean number of adult males in the family	1 65	1 63	1 80	0 17	1098
19	Mean number of adult females in the family***	1 75	1 70	2 17	0 47	1096
20	Mean number of school going children in the family*	1 76	1 78	1 43	0 35	549

Notes! refers to log transformed variable to make the distribution normal # Widows constituted 1.4 percent of the sample t-test, ***, **, ** significant at the 01, 05, 1 levels respectively

contribution') were collected On average, the initial contribution for the full sample is Rs 11 as against the current contribution of Rs 23 (lines 7 and 8) This contribution is regular and made on a weekly basis As evident from the current contribution of the members, the contribution of the members increases corresponding to their growth in their membership. Within a membership span of two-and-a-half years (the average length of membership), the contribution has been more than doubled Any increase in weekly contribution depends mainly on the habit of savings of the members and their intention to take loans from the groups. The married members pay Rs 11 37 as their initial weekly contribution to the groups while the unmarried pay less (Rs 102) As for the current weekly contribution, the amount is Rs 23 33 and Rs 1977 for the married and the unmarried respectively (line 8) Significant variation (at 5 % level) is seen between the married and the unmarried in the current contribution but not in the initial contribution. The married members prefer to put more money in the groups as their current contribution. Perhaps this signifies their savings habit and the precautions they take to meet financial contingencies More weekly contributions, in a way, ensure more opportunities for loans which might motivate the married members to contribute more to the groups

Nine out of every ten members have taken loans from their own SHGs (Table 1, line 9) In availing loans, married members are way ahead of the unmarried members, though this variable is not associated when Chi-square test was employed More married members than the unmarried have taken loans with a difference of five percentage points

(88 and 83 percent respectively) This finding corroborates our earlier explanation that weekly contribution and number of loans are related. The members in general have taken 2 39 loans per member, the married having the highest average of 2 41 loans but inadequate to show any significant difference in variation in t-test (line 10) When this figure is divided by the duration of membership, which is 2 58 years for the whole sample, the number of loans per member per year comes to 0 93

Loans are of two kinds consumption loans and bank loans. Consumption loans are granted from the savings of the groups, usually given to the members to meet their immediate and unexpected needs The amount of consumption loan varies from Rs 100 to 25,000, normally payable in 15 months' time. Invariably the loan amount sanctioned to the members depends on the amount of savings the members have deposited with the groups Bank loans, on the other hand, are meant for supporting income-generating activities of the members. The members request for bank loans when they plan to start enterprising ventures such as selling bags and eatables, purchasing sewing machines or buying cattle to make a living Consumption loans can be availed if the members have completed six months of membership with the groups which do not apply to bank loans because bank loans require members to have at least one-year's membership in the groups. If there is more than one claim for a single loan, the groups will jointly decide to whom the loan has to be given, primarily on the basis of the urgency of the needs of the contenders As members are known to each other and live in the same neighbourhood, rarely are there attempts to misrepresent facts by members to obtain loans. This is the advantage of the social capital which works on the principles of trust and norms of network (Putnam 1993) If a member requires a loan for her medical or hospital needs, she will be given preference to others whose needs for loans can be waited or delayed for another week or so Before applying for loans, the members are supposed to inform the groups at least one week in advance on the regular weekly meeting

In both consumption and bank loans, the number of loans availed by members is slightly more for the married than the unmarried, but without any statistically significant variation (lines 11 and 12). Consumption loans have been taken by many whereas only a few members have secured bank loans (N=173) The average number of consumption loans taken by members is 2 22 as against 1 21 bank loans. As for the amount of all loans, the average per member is Rs 5,528, with a substantial difference of Rs 1,095 between the married and the unmarried. The independent t-test shows that the married, in contrast to the unmarried, have benefited more in terms of the total sum of loans with a significant

difference at 0.1 percent level (line 13). A similar pattern is observed in the total amount of consumption loans taken by the members (line 14). Members (all), on average got Rs 4,456 as consumption loans with a significant difference of Rs 1,052 between the married and the unmarried members. The total sum of consumption loans for the married is higher than that for all the members (full sample). This finding points to the needs of the married women, in comparison to the unmarried, for immediate loans like consumption loans demanded probably by their familial responsibilities. Bank loans are taken to the tune of Rs 6,469 per member. Though the married have taken more bank loans (line 15), the variation is minimal.

Who deposits more money with the groups? The married members have deposited more money than an average member (line 16) Often the savings of the members serve as a guarantee to obtain loans in the future. It works out in the same way as the weekly contribution. If the accumulated sum of the savings in the credit of a member is more, the chances for the member are more for obtaining loans for several times. The married are wiser in this regard, they have more savings with the groups than the unmarried. The difference is Rs 186 for the married which is significant at 5 percent level when t-test was run.

In order to examine the family background of the members, the size of the family and the number of adult males, adult females and school going children in the family are taken into account. In fact, it is a proxy variable that will help us to understand how the family responsibilities are related to their savings and credit-use. The average size of the family is 48 for the sample of respondents. For the married respondents, the size of the family is more than that of the unmarried, as in the case of the number of adult females and school going children However, the unmarried have more adult females in their families. Some families have more adult members, which might have necessitated the respondents to ioin the groups More adult female members, if they are unemployed and dependent, would mean additional family burden which could become the responsibility of the female members in the family to share with their parents and husbands As the data show, perhaps due to the presence of more adult female members in the family, the unmarried have preferred to join the groups to make a living and/or to contribute to the family ıncome

From the above preliminary analysis of the basic characteristics of the members and the results presented in Table 1, significant variations between the married and the unmarried members are evident in several respects. The married earn more, contribute more to their weekly share of savings (current savings), deposit more with the groups, and take more loans in terms of number, total loan sum and consumption loans. What makes this difference? Do savings and credit-use of the members relate to their marital status or any other variable? To explain this, multiple regression was run

Savings and Marital Status

As mentioned earlier, the measure of savings of the members consists of the weekly contribution of the members and the deposits they save with the SHGs Initial weekly contribution has not shown any significant difference between the married and the unmarried when independent ttest was done (line 7, Table 1) However, significant difference in current weekly contribution is obvious between the married and the unmarried (Rs 23 33 and Rs 19 77 respectively) Therefore, a regression model was tested with the current weekly contribution as the dependent and the dummy variable for marriage as independent (1 = married and 0 =unmarried) In the regression model other control variables, such as the duration of membership, age of the member, family size, and number of adult males, adult females and school-going children in the family, were used The standardised beta coefficient as presented in Table 2 (column 3) shows that the current weekly contribution of the members is correlated significantly with their duration of membership and age. The married members and the amount of current weekly contribution is not related as other variables like family size, number of adult males and females and school going children. It means the current weekly contribution of the members is unaffected by the family size or the number of adult members in the family Variables such as the number of adult males in the family and number of school going children are negatively related to the weekly contribution, but they are not significant. The model, therefore, explains that the current weekly contribution of the members to their respective SHGs is determined by the span of their membership To put it differently, the growth in the savings of the members corresponds to the duration of the years the members work with the groups More the years with the groups entails more current weekly contributions to the groups Age is another negatively correlated predictor variable with the weekly savings of the members. In other words, as the members get older their weekly savings tend to diminish The sum of the weekly contribution of the members is therefore, determined by the duration of the membership Marital status is not related to the current weekly payments of the members

Savings with the groups is another key variable that speaks about the savings pattern of the members. The members deposit their money with

Table 2 Regression of Savings (Current Weekly Contribution [CWC], and Total Deposits with the Groups) of the Members on Marital Status, Age, Duration of Membership, Family Size, Number of Adult Members and Number of School Going Children

No	Variable	CWC	Deposit
1	2	3	4
1	Married	022	095 *
2	Duration of membership in SHGs	125 *	360 ***
3	Age of the member	- 118 **	- 052
4	Family size	039	- 067
5	Number of adult males	004	064
6	Number of adult females	- 019	030
7	Number of school going children	- 034	031
L			
R ²		028	142
Ň		641	633

Note ***, **, * significant at the 01, 05, 1 levels respectively

the groups, it is a prerequisite for them to avail loans at times of contingency The accumulated deposits also serve as a guarantee to obtain loans when the members need them Married members have deposited an average sum of Rs 1,458 with the groups as against Rs 1,271 deposited by an average unmarried member This means Rs 565 per year for each married member and Rs 480 for the unmarried member. In the independent t-test, the difference is found to be significant at 5 percent level (line 16, Table 1) To go further, multiple regression was done to understand the relation between the total amount of money the members deposit in the groups and their marital status using total deposit as the dependent variable and the dummy marital variable as independent variable along with the same other control variables used in the first regression. The standard beta coefficient of correlation shows that being married and the duration of the membership are positively related (at a significant level) to the total amount of deposits of the members (lines 1 and 2, column 4, Table 2) It explains about 15 percent ($R^2 = 142$) of the variance of the dependent variable Married members tend to deposit more than the unmarried with the groups In the same way the duration of membership affects the amount of deposit, that is, the longer the membership the more is the deposit with the groups. At the same time, the age of the members and the family size are negatively related to the deposit, but the correlation is insignificant. As the members grow in age, the deposit tends to decline Evidently, the married with long years of membership deposit more money with the groups than their unmarried counterparts

Deposits within groups, as in the case of the weekly contribution made to the groups, serve as a kind of security for their life. Married members are likely to save more with the groups obviously because of the security they need not only for them but also for their families at times of urgency. Nevertheless, the model does not explain the influence of other family variables such as the number of adult males or females, and the number of school going children on savings. In essence, the members who are married and who have long years of membership in the SHG are the ones with more deposits in their own SHGs.

Credit-use and Marital Status

To arrive at a measure of the credit-use of the members both the number of loans and the amount of loans availed by the members are considered. For the measure of the number of loans, both the total number of all loans, the total number of all consumption loans, and the total number of all bank loans are combined. As for the measure of the amount, the total amount of all loans, and the amount of all consumption and all bank loans are calculated.

Preliminary analysis using independent t-test showed that there are differences between the married and the unmarried in both the measures of credit-use such as the number of loans and the amount of loans (lines 10 through 15, Table 1) However, significant differences between the married and the unmarried are seen only in the measure of the amount of loans, namely, the total sum of all loans and the sum of all consumption loans (line 13 and 14, Table 1) Therefore, only these two variables are engaged for further analysis using multiple regression. The same independent and control variables have been used here as well

The model shown in column 3 of Table 3 explains that the total amount of loans is dependent on the marital status of the members In this case, variables such as the duration of membership, age of the members and number of adult males are correlated with the married members. It explains one-third ($R^2 = 312$) of the variance of the total loan sum with seven factors. Age is negatively related to the total loan sum, that is, the total sum of all the loans taken declines with the age of the members. Clearly, this means those who are married, young, working in the groups for longer years (duration of membership), and those who have more adult male members in the family take more loans than the rest. Even if it is assumed, on the basis of the amount of loans they have availed, that the married members have more family responsibilities and obligations, the size of the family or the number of adult females or school going children are not the real indicators (as they are not positively associated).

Table 3 Regression of Credit-use (Total Loan Sum and Total Consumption Loan) on Marital Status, Age, Duration of Membership, Family Size, Number of Adult Members and Number of School-going Children

No	Variable	Total loan	Consumption loan
1	2	3	4
1	Married	138 ***	122 *
2	Duration of membership in SHGs	539 ***	466 ***
3	Age of the member	- 079 **	- 051
4	Family size	- 057	- 021
5	Number of adult males	107 **	092
6	Number of adult females	011	- 018
7	Number of School going children	015	- 031
R^2		312	233
N		569	562

Note ***, **, * significant at the 01, 05, 1 levels respectively

In fact, the size of the family is negatively associated, even though it is statistically insignificant

Model 2 presented in Table 3 (column 4) shows that the sum of all consumption loans and the married members are related Married members, compared to the unmarried, have taken more consumption loans As in model 1 (presented in the same Table, column 3), the same independent and control variables as against the dependent variable of the sum of consumption loans have been used. The model explains about one-quarter ($R^2 = 233$) of variance of the sum of consumption loans with seven factors Positive correlation exists between the sum of consumption loans and the duration of the membership Age, family size, number of adult females and school-going children are negatively associated with the amount of consumption loans but they are insignificant. Here again, as in the case of total loan sum, married members have obtained more consumption loans than the unmarried The duration of one's membership in the groups is also a determinant factor in the amount of consumption loans availed by the members. In short, the married and those who have long years of membership in the groups tend to take more consumption loans than the others Consumption loans are usually taken for meeting the immediate and urgent needs indicating the financial burden that women bear in running the households, along with their husbands

Conclusion

The data presented in this paper strongly suggest that the marital status of women members is a crucial variable in the study of SHGs which use microfinance as a major programme of activity either for the elimination of poverty or for the empowerment of women Marital status determines the patterns of savings and credit-use of women members in SHGs The difference between the married and the unmarried in their savings and credit-use as measured in the study is very clear Contributing regularly but relatively more to the groups by way of their weekly payments (current contribution) and depositing more money with the groups, the married members are ahead of their unmarried counterparts Similarly, in the credit-use of the members, as reflected in the amount of loans, the married are a different lot. The married have obtained more loan sum (total) and more consumption loans Partly, this finding is in agreement with several other studies that highlighted the relation between women and their use of credit for consumption needs (Jiggins 1989, Clark 1991, Goetz and Gupta 1996, Hulme and Mosley 1996, Wood and Sharif 1997, Kabeer 1998, Khandekar et al 1998, Pitt and Khandekar 1998, Hunt and Kasynathan 2001, Wydick 2002) Copestake et al (2001), unlike others, have gone further by considering the importance of the variable of marital status in the use of credit. The data presented here too agree with the significance of marital status in influencing the savings habit and the credit-use pattern of the members The married vis-à-vis the unmarried tend to spend more on their consumption needs

When seeking plausible explanations for the relation between martial status and savings one is supposed to consider the family background of the members In the given context of Kerala, the married have more financial responsibilities and obligations than the unmarried However, the present data are madequate to explain this dimension due to the absence of any relation between marital status and family variables such as the family size, the number of adult members and number of school going children Nevertheless, the resultant pattern implies that the married also share some financial responsibilities of their families with their husbands. Obviously, the members of the SHGs belong to the economically poor segments of the population and both the husbands and wives work together to meet both ends When a good number of them are unemployed (57 % among the married) and presumably their husbands too. SHGs and microfinance become a source of their livelihood and a means of life However, the magnitude of their family responsibilities, in relation to that of their husbands, is not clear from the data. In the light of the findings, it may not be wrong to assume that the differences in the

savings and credit-use are due to the increased family responsibilities of the married members, or at least in sharing the responsibilities with their husbands. On the other hand, the unmarried who also join the SHGs to make a living are not as constrained as the married in sharing their family responsibilities with other members in the family. As far as the unmarried are concerned, the burden falls mostly on the shoulders of their parents and other adult male members.

Keralite women are a different lot when compared with their counterparts elsewhere in India The long tradition of matrilineal system, prevalent among a few major communities of Kerala, gave women a relatively better position in the society A favourable sex ratio for women, viewed as an indicator of women's position, showed an increase from 1,022 women to 1,000 men in 1961 to 1,058 in 2001. Literacy among women in Kerala has also been showing a growing trend 12 Higher levels of female participation in employment, better awareness of health and information among women, maternal utilisation of the available health system and the role of women in the decision-making of their own households are also some of the distinctive features of Kerala women (Ramachandran 2000 91-3) 13 The crucial role women had played in Kerala, particularly in its demographic transition, is well documented (Kannan 2000 50) In enhancing life expectancy, declining birth, death and infant mortality rates, bringing down the average number of children, and in lifting up the average age at marriage, women's role has been significant in the state. The low birth rate of Kerala is associated with the higher age at marriage of women 14

The above factors have a positive influence on the role of women in the affairs of their family. Women undertake family responsibilities as well, sometimes on par with their husbands or even beyond that. The involvement of women in the mundane affairs of the family is perhaps a reason for their increased savings and credit-use. However, further research into this aspect of family responsibilities needs to be done

Notes

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- 1 The members are allowed to avail two types of loans, namely consumption loans and bank loans
- 2 Richard W Franke and Barbara H Chasin define the 'Kerala Model' as a 'set of high material quality-of-life indicators along with low per capita incomes, both distributed

- across nearly the entire population, a set of wealth and resource redistribution programmes that have largely brought about the high material quality-of-life indicators, and high levels of political participation and activism among ordinary people along with substantial numbers of dedicated leaders at all levels' (2000 17)
- With a current population of 31,841,374 people, Kerala records an inter-census (1991-2001) growth rate of 0.9 percent. In population density, it is the third state among other 28 states (excluding Union Territories), only after the states of West Bengal and Bihar Kerala had the highest population density when the previous census was taken in 1991 Again, it is about two-and-a-half times higher than the figures of the country as a whole (all-India 324, Kerala 819 and West Bengal 904 per sq km) As regards demographic indicators like life expectancy, and rates of birth, death, infant mortality, maternal mortality, and population Kerala stands at a higher level and well above the all-India average Kerala recorded a birth rate of 179 as against 27 2 for India in 1997 Death rate in Kerala was 6 2 while it was 8 9 for India for the same year The difference in the rate of infant mortality between Kerala and India was very wide with 12 per 1,000 for Kerala and 71 for India during the same reference period. The general fertility rate in Kerala was about half of that of India (61 7 Kerala and 112 5 for India in 1996) Same is the case with the total fertility rate (1 8 for Kerala and 3 4 for India) The long life expectancy (73 62 years for women and 68 23 years for men in 1991) and high literacy rate of 90 92 percent (87 86% for women and 94 2 % for men) are other distinguishing features of Kerala
- 4 For instance, life expectancy at birth in Kerala was 72 years (1995) when it was 76 years (1993) for the USA Similarly, the difference between Kerala and the USA is not much in aspects such as death rate per 1000 (8 8 and 6 for USA and Kerala respectively), infant mortality rate per 1,000 births (9 and 12), birth rate per 1,000 (15 9 and 15), total fertility rate (2 1 and 1 8) and literacy (96 and 93 percent) (see Parameswaran 2000 233)
- The WIN Society is a network dedicated to the development and social transformation of women Formed in 1991, this NGO currently operates not only in Kerala but in other states such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and in some Northeastern states The broad objectives of the WIN Society include (i) To take meaningful initiatives in the areas of gender justice, literacy, adult education, health, environmental and legal awareness and protection, with a particular focus on the poorer sections of the society (ii) The initiation of well-planned programmes for the all-round empowerment of the women, especially of the poorer masses of the Indian women, through skills-development and income-generating programmes (iii) The fostering among the women of India, specifically among the poorer women, a meaningful and realistic sense of their own identity, predicament, and possibilities through a humanising gender education and cultural programmes (iv) Networking with women's groups and movements throughout the country for the development of a sense of worldwide women's solidarity (v) Taking initiatives in research, documentation and publication on issues relating to social justice, environmental and ecological problems, women's and children's issues
- 6 The aims and objectives of NGOs in Kerala cover a wide spectrum of subjects and themes, such as socioeconomic development, empowerment of women, development of the rural folks, tribals, environmental protection, rehabilitations of the needy, awareness programmes, poverty alleviation, leadership training, consumer protection, conscientisation, and so on They are literally ambitious in this selection of objectives, as all in all they have listed over a hundred aims and objectives in their agenda. The objectives and programmes of the NGOs in the state depend on the type of organisations which, in turn, is affected greatly by the social, cultural and economic backdrops of specific regions and localities. If a region, for instance, is known for

- certain cultural activities and has a tradition of encouraging such activities in the area, the NGOs working for such specific cultural needs will be relatively more than any other type of organisations. In other words, the type of organisation is directly related to the socioeconomic and cultural milieu of the region (see Sooryamoorthy 2002)
- The WIN Society founded its first SHG in 1997 in its own neighbourhood at Eramalloor in Alappuzha Prior to this, the WIN Society had only Mahila Samajams (Women's Associations) When the NGO realised that it is difficult to motivate women to be active members in such associations they thought of forming SHGs with the help of other like-minded people and organisations working in the nearby areas. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and some NGOs were then taking the initiatives to organise women's groups under Community Development Society (CDS) in Alappuzha There were also attempts by the Kuttanad Vikasana Samithi (Kuttanad Development Committee) in Alappuzha district WIN Society allied with these banks and agencies, and ventured into the area of SHGs and initiated groups NABARD provided loans to the groups upon evaluation of their functioning for about a year NABARD, before taking a decision to sanction loans, assesses the groups on the basis of the structure, origin, meetings, attendance, participation of members, savings, repayments, democratic nature of the group, credit-savings rate and maintenance of records
- 8 There are 14 districts in Kerala The state has 63 taluks, 152 rural blocks and 1,452 villages
- 9 Alappuzha district, with an area of 1,414 sq km, has a population of 2,105,349 It has a sex ratio of 1,079 women for every 1,000 men Ernakulam district, on the other hand, is bigger than Alappuzha with an area of 2,407 sq km The sex ratio in Ernakulam is lower than Alappuzha with 1,017
- 10 This may be compared with the figures for the districts. In Alappuzha, the general literacy rate is 93 66 percent, male 96 42 and female 91 14, and in Ernakulam it is 93 42 percent, male 95 95 and female 90 96 percent.
- 11 As for India, the figures for the corresponding years were 941 and 933 respectively
- 12 In 1961, literacy among women was 38 9 percent which went up to 87 9 percent in 2001 while the figures for India (all-India average) were 13 and 54 2 percent respect-tively
- 13 It is also noted that poverty alleviation can be successfully achieved with a reduction in gender gaps between men and women in Kerala (Kannan 2000 40-41)
- 14 Women in Kerala get married at a later age than an average Indian woman, at least by three years. In 1994, for instance, the age at marriage of women was 22 3 years, as against 19 4 years for all-India (Kannan 2000)

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Spiritual Cultivation for a Secular Society

Ananta Kumar Giri

The project of building a rationalistic self and secular society was an important part of the project of modernity, and this project is now confronted with an epochal crisis. The modernist conception of secular self, society and public sphere is now under siege, locally as well as globally, which in turn calls for a broadened conception of self, civil society and secularism. Taking the debates about the crisis of secularism in contemporary India as its main point of discussion, this paper examines the reshaping of secularism as not an a priori denigration of religion but as an ethos of pluralism, non-violence, kenosis and self-emptying which involves a simultaneous critique of religious tradition and secular state. Such a reshaping of secularism, the paper argues, calls for an appropriate spiritual cultivation of self and society

the world today speaks Latin (most often via Anglo-American) when it authorizes itself in the name of religion
- Jacques Derrida (1998-27)

being able to laugh at oneself would entail not less but more transcendence. It is a piece of folk wisdom that Kierkegaard knew well

- Walter Lowe (2002 246)

The Problem

In recent years, much discussion has taken place on the nature of secularism in India, its uses and abuses Broadly speaking, we can classify various contending positions on secularism in India into three approaches:
(1) those which defend the secular character of Indian Republic as enshrined in the Constitution of India, (ii) those which oppose it on the ground that the practice of Indian state-led secularism has been a pseudo-secularism, and (iii) those which critique that secularism is western in origin, and we must have something in its place which is appropriate to centuries-long tradition of India of spontaneous religious harmony and inter-religious co-existence. While I do not want to spend much time on

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the second argument, I wish to draw attention to a dead-end in which both the first and the third arguments are locked at present, and how both need to rethink secularism and reshape it with a spiritual cultivation of self and society

The defence of secularism in the face of the rising fundamentalism in Indian polity, especially in the wake of the 1992-demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya which was a watershed in the history of secularism in post-independent India, by many left-wing scholars and constitutional experts has been mechanical, and it does not wish to make a dialogue with the transcendental dimension of religion Religion is a 'false consciousness' to these secularists However, even if it is a 'false consciousness', religion is a reality in the lives of millions of people in the Indian subcontinent as, it is in many parts of the world, including the so-called secularised universe of North America and Western Europe

How do we come to terms with religion, if from the beginning we label it as a form of 'false consciousness'? It is probably for this reason that André Béteille, himself an ardent defender of secularism in contemporary India, tells us 'If civil society is pluralistic and tolerant in its very nature, then it would be absurd for it to wish to expel religious institutions from its fold or to denigrate its beliefs as a form of false consciousness' (1996. 23) He warns us against what he calls the 'adoption of a militantly secular ideology' 'Our constitution is based, I believe wisely, on the separation between religion and politics, and on their mutual toleration Civil society must find ways of creating and nurturing secular institutions, but that objective is likely to be hindered by the adoption of a militantly secular ideology' (Ibid) As William Connolly argues, 'The historical modus vivendi of secularism, while seeking to chastise religious dogmatism, embodies unacknowledged elements of immodesty in itself. The very intensity of the struggle it wages against religious tolerance may widen blind spots with respect to itself' (1999 4)

India is a multi-religious country, and the agenda of her secularism is to ensure, facilitate and enhance toleration among people of different religious faiths. However, defenders of secularism have not told us much about how to have, ensure and facilitate religious toleration. Similarly, those who oppose secularism on the ground that it has originated in the socio-historical context of Western Europe, which has a monoculture of Christianity and is not applicable to our ethos of religious pluralism, and present 'Anti-Secular Manifestoes' (see Nandy 1985), do not say that they want our society and politics to be guided by religious authorities. In other words, their agenda is not one of a return to theocracy or 'establishment of a Hindu state' (Madan 1992, 408). However, they do not spell out clearly

their positive agenda, and whether their desire to relate to religion authentically and sympathetically supports violence and authoritarianism perpetrated in the name of religion

A clear example of this ambivalence is the work of Ashis Nandy and T.N Madan, two proponents of the third approach to secularism mentioned above. Both of them make a cultural critique of the agenda of secularism, and in the process rope in Mahatma Gandhi For example, Madan (1992-408) writes

Perhaps men of religion such as Mahatma Gandhi would be our best teachers on the proper relation between religion and politics—values and interests—underlining not only the possibilities of inter-religious understanding, which is not the same thing as an emaciated version of mutual tolerance or respect but also opening out avenues of a spiritually justified limitation of the role of religious institutions in certain areas of contemporary life

However, Madan does not take further the issue of spiritual critique of religion which he just hints at with his phrase 'spiritually justified limitation of the role of religion' (Ibid) If secularism has to be redefined as 'religious pluralism,' as Madan (1997: 262) argues, then how does it relate to non-religious participation in our public life and what is its ethos of engagement-ethics of self-cultivation, terms of public dialogue and politics of becoming? (see Connolly 1999) Furthermore, Madan does not realise that the proposed intermixture of secularism and faith is not simply a given—as he seems to be suggesting—but has to be an object of a spiritual sadhana. Madan does not explore the preparation in self and society that is required to make this possible Gandhian agenda of secularism is a transformative agenda of alternative practice and movement at the level of self. culture and society For Gandhi, to be secular, that is, to be able to accept each other coming from different religious backgrounds, one has to be spiritual, but this spirituality is a matter of conscious striving, sadhana and struggle It is an aspect of continuous self-cultivation in the life of both individuals and societies Therefore, Gandhi used to have inter-faith prayer meetings everyday This aspect of the Gandhian agenda of spiritual cultivation of self and society does not find much place in Madan's critique, even in his latest work, Modern myth and locked minds (1997)

In this context of the dead-end in the discourse and practice of secularism, this paper explores the pathways of a spiritual reshaping of secularism from an emergent transdisciplinary perspective involving dialogues with sociology, anthropology, political theory, theology, philosophy and literature From the perspective of spiritual cultivation, the paper redefines secularism as genuine toleration (facilitated by appropriate onto-

logical cultivation and inter-subjective dialogue), non-violence and self-emptying or kenosis vis-à-vis one's will to power, domination and annihilation. The paper argues that both the critics and defenders of secularism need a radical spiritual supplement for a fuller realisation of their potential, and preparing them against one-sided self-closure and for simultaneous critique of religious tradition and secular state from the perspective of human dignity and non-violence Cultivation in spirituality would enable us to reconstitute secularism as genuine pluralism, both ontological and social, and characterised by a striving for realisation of non-duality between self and other, self and society, among religious groups, and between the religious spheres and the state A spiritual cultivation would enable us to realise the plurivocal dimensions of our beings as well as broaden and deepen civil society and public sphere as a space of 'multi-dimensional pluralism' (see Connolly 1999, Giri 2002b, Uberoi 2002)

Our contemporary conceptions of civil society and public sphere suffer from a rationalist and secularist blindness where religion and spirituality are automatically excluded A spiritual cultivation for a secular society contributes to a contemporary renewal of public sphere beyond the rationalist gaze of Immanuel Kant, John Rawls and Jurgen Habermas Thus, starting with the specific debate about secularism in contemporary Indian society, the paper touches some of the broad themes of modernity, discusses the emergent evolutionary calling of practical spirituality, and points to the need for realisation of non-duality and transcendence in self, society and polity as a way of spiritualising secularism and modernity, self and the public sphere Spiritualisation here is not bound to religion, belief in a personal god, theistic beliefs and other familiar orthodoxies but embodies a permanent critique of violation of life and incessant striving for establishment of relationships of dignity

Critiques of Secularism and the Calling of Spiritual Transformations

In the Indian context, Nandy and Madan have been at the forefront of presenting a cultural critique of secularism as a statist, hegemonic and culturally alien ideology. For Nandy (1985), much violence has been perpetrated by the secularist state, and it is the ideology of secularism that not only makes us look at religion with suspicion but also does not enable us to build on traditionally existent people's capacity for co-existence. Madan's critique of secularism also begins with such a view. The problem of secularism in India, for Madan, is the problem of a 'modernist minority', which is 'beset with deep anxieties about the future of secularism in the country and South Asia generally', which in its attempt to rescue

secularism wants to 'foster modern scientific temper' as a foundation for secularism (1992 396)

However, in Madan's critique of secularism, the issue is not only between modernity and tradition, but also between different religious traditions in the way they classify the world. For Madan, the modernist ideology of secularism has its most comfortable home in Christian religious tradition, namely, in its supposed neat distinction between the sacred and the secular. In other religious traditions such as Hinduism and Islam, for Madan, though there is a distinction between the two, the secular is always hierarchically encompassed by the religious. Madan's argument is that since a majority of people of South Asia are vibrant followers of other religions, they have a problem in feeling at home in the dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. The Hindu tradition does not provide us with a dualistic view of the kind that Christianity does. I find that a Hindu or a Sikh or a Muslim for that matter would find it more difficult to make sense of the notion of "privatisation of religion" than perhaps a Christian does' (Madan 1998 319)

Madan's reflections on comparative religious approaches to secularity call for a deeper anthropology of religions, particularly of Christianity which in the Indian context is a neglected domain of inquiry. It remains to be ethnographically validated if Protestant Christians are more secular or feel more at home with the ideology of secularism in a multi-religious society such as India or even in Western Europe and North America Furthermore, in the last quarter century, we have witnessed intense mobilisation against privatisation of religion globally in which many Christian movements including Protestant ones such as liberation theology and Habitat for Humanity have been key actors (Beyer 1994, Giri 2002a). For Madan, secularism is a gift of Christianity; it is Protestantism which has made a fuller delivery of this gift possible. However, even in understanding post-Reformation ideal of secularism there is a problem here as it neglects the trajectory of what Charles Taylor (1996) calls 'Catholic modernity' It is the Catholic encounter with modernity, as Alexis de Tocqueville (1961) suggests from his encounter with the dialectic of individualism and equality in American democracy, which has struggled more on the side of equality rather than just feel satisfied with possessive individualism 1

Gianni Vattimo, a critical philosopher who comes to his Christian faith taking both Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger seriously, makes a similar argument about secularism and Christianity According to Vattimo (1999), there is an intimate connection between the secular project and the Christian vocation in the world, as Jesus

Christ makes a break with violence In making the connection between secularisation and Christianity, Vattimo urges us to realise that secularisation here is characterised by the striving for non-violence, kenosis or self-emptying which also means 'self-abasing' oneself in love, and charity For Vattimo, secularisation means working with a 'non-violent and non-absolute God,' a god who is 'post-metaphysical'.

If the natural sacred is the violent mechanism that Jesus came to unveil and undermine, it is possible that secularisation—which also constitutes the Church's loss of temporal authority and human reason's increasing autonomy from its dependence upon an absolute God, a fearful Judge who so transcends our ideas about good and evil as to appear as a capricious or bizarre sovereign—is precisely a positive effect of Jesus' teaching, and not a way of moving away from it' (*Ibid* 41)

For Vattimo, non-violence inaugurated by Jesus' break with the supposed violence of the natural sacred, is an important part of the secular vocation As Madan's formulations suffer from a weak anthropology and theology of Christianity, Vattimo's suffer from a messianic zeal of it and lacks a cross-cultural and cross-religious realisation that all sacred is not violent The god of Taitteriya Upansihad who meditates upon himself to bring forth a world is not violent. This apart, Vattimo's reflections urge us to realise the many other dimensions in the connection between Christian vocation and secularisation Secularisation here is not confined to the neat distinction between the sacred and the secular but points to normative ideals of non-violence, kenosis or self-emptying, and charity-ideals which call for appropriate self-realisation and institutional transformations. These ideals, arguing with Vattimo against Vattimo, are not the legacy of Christianity alone, and they can work as a critique of both religion and secularism conventionally understood If we understand secularism as kenosis or self-emptying then one challenge of being secular is to empty oneself from one's will to power Secularism as self-emptying of power poses enormous challenge to the prevalent conceptions of secularism and models of emancipation as empowerment and urges us to realise that emancipation as politics of empowerment must have within itself an ethics and spirituality of self-cultivation so that one does not become a slave to one's will to power in one's private life and the public sphere Secularism as kenosis or self-emptying vis-à-vis one's will to power challenges us not to be obsessed with, as Michel Foucault urges, 'exercising power over others' and to be concerned with discovering and realising 'what one is purely in relation to oneself' (1986 85). Secularism as kenosis can thus be linked to Foucauldian 'care of the self' 'It is then a matter of forming and

recognising oneself as the subject of one's own actions, not through a system of signs denoting power over others, but through a relation that depends as little possible on status, and its external forms' (*Ibid*)

Madan concludes his address with a passionate urging to take both religion and secularism seriously. However, this entails a mutual critique of the two, and a foundational interrogation and broadening of categories In his critique, Madan presents us a cross-cultural interrogation of what may be called the ideology of secularism Secular ideology for Madan leads to 'the marginalisation of religious faith' The more foundational problem, for Madan, which he expresses in the words of Falzur Rahman, is that 'Secularism destroys the sanctity and universality (transcendence) of all moral values' (Madan 1992 402) Does secularism do this or has to necessarily to do this? Does religion always promote moral values? Does invocation of transcendence necessarily lead to human emancipation? What kind of ultimate values lead to human annihilation and what kind of ultimate values lead to human flourishing including a mutual charing of each others ultimate values? If, as Vattimo (1999 90) suggests, love is the ultimate value and all of us have sinned because we have failed in love. then should we be prepared to reject religions if they fail us in love?

Madan himself says that religious traditions of South Asia are 'totalising in character, claiming all of a follower's life' (1992–399) However, in our engagement with religion, should we support its totalitarianism? For Madan, I am sure, respect for religion does not mean support for a totalitarian determination of life in the name of religion. Taking religion seriously means engaging ourselves with a critique of it, and realising the significance of secularism as it has loosened the totalitarian hold of religion and has contributed to the quest and realisation of human freedom. As Thomas Pantham argues,

The problematic relationship between religion and politics in the West had its analogues in India too Despite important philosophical or metaphysical differences between them, both European Christianity and Indian religions rationalised in their own ways, a feudal order of social inequalities prevailing during the medieval period (1999–182)

In the medieval world, a radical interrogation of religion as a partner in social exploitation was articulated by varieties of socio-spiritual movements such as the Anabaptists in Europe and Bhakti (devotional) movements in India Bhakti movements were spiritually inspired socio-spiritual movements which fought against caste and gender hierarchy in medieval India. The work of spirituality in Bhakti movements involved a critique of

religion as a partner in systemic oppression of society and quest for establishment of relationships of dignity As Chitta Ranjan Das argues,

To go inside in the life of the spirit is also to expand oneself in terms of consciousness, to break down the separating wall between oneself and the all Self-realisation with the medieval saints of India was not a running away from the world to what is called to save one's soul, it is being reborn egoless, so that you are able to look at the whole world in a different eye. You become a rebel because you want the relationships and arrangements of society to be determined anew (1982b. 80).

Thus, secularism as a fight for human emancipation and striving for realisation of human freedom has also an origin in spiritual protests both in India and Europe, and this helps us to deconstruct religion as we take it seriously. In medieval India, Bhakti movements characterised by a quest for love and non-violence have been the forbearers of secularism and modernity, what JPS Uberoi (1996) calls 'Indian modernity', which started with Kabir and has found an ally in Gandhi, among others, in the midway What is interesting is that this spiritual origin of secularism buttresses the non-violent character of it as pointed to us by Vattimo and is characterised by a religion, spirituality and praxis of love Spirituality as a movement of transformation in self and society and embodied in the life and work of Antigone, Socrates, Buddha, Jesus, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Meister Eckhart, Bhakti movements, Ali Shariati, and innumerable movements of what can be called 'practical spirituality' all over the world provides not only a critique of secularism but also a radical interrogation of religion (see Uberoi 1996 and 2002) It is my submission that both the critique and the defence of secularism would be enriched by bringing the vision and practice of spirituality not only to our discourse but also to our practice

Opening ourselves to such sources of secularism calls for crossing the borders of conventional academic boundaries. When we look at the discursive field of secularism this seems to be a crucial challenge, as it is bounded by a dualistic logic and is one-dimensional and mono-disciplinary. In contemporary Indian society and scholarship, it is a field which suffers from the blindness of disciplinary exclusivity which affects both the critics and defenders. The political scientists writing here talk mostly of the state, to some extent of civil society, and of course always of Constitution. Anthropologists such as Madan or cultural critics such as Nandy enter the field with an a priori privileging of the religious and faith in the capacity for tolerance in the pre-modern life-world. However, if the task before us is an interpretative task of providing more clarity to the agenda

of secularism, as Madan challenges us in the Indian context and Connolly in the Euro-American world, then what is called for is a creative embodiment of transdisciplinarity. This calls for political scientists to go beyond the secured logic of Constitution and the state and anthropologists to acknowledge, as Béteille (1992 and 2002) would urge, that contemporary Indian society is governed not only by *Dharmasastras* but also by Constitution. However, the called for transdisciplinary participation here must have within it the perspective of spiritual movements and seekers, and cross the boundaries between sociology and spiritual seeking Elsewhere (see Giri 2000), I have argued that a spiritual process of abandonment and creative exploration is central to the practice of transdisciplinarity and the discursive field of secularism calls for a spiritual interrogation of our disciplinary homes in anthropology, sociology, philosophy, theology and even spirituality ²

Such transdisciplinary participation has not only semantic function or scholastic utility, it has important implications for our art of learning and living in a secular society. Consider here Nandy's statement 'As far as public morality goes, statecraft in India may have something to learn from Hinduism, Islam or Sikhism, but Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism have very little to learn from the contribution from state secular practices' (quoted in Pantham 1999–177). However, do not Muslim males who do not give alimony to their divorced wives, and caste Hindus who burn dalits, have something to learn from the Indian Constitution? Do not the well-meaning Hindus, Muslims and Sikhish have something to learn from the secular principles of the Indian Constitution?

Thus, in rethinking secularism, the challenge is one of multidimensional learning and a simultaneous critique of both religious tradition and the modern state. A transdisciplinary participation in secularism with a radical spiritual supplement can prepare us against one-sided, confident self-closure and for simultaneous critique of both religious traditions and the secular state. Here Gandhi can help us in not only discovering the religious resources for living in a secular society, but also in initiating a spiritual transformation of the telos and the machinery of modern state. For Gandhi, 'the modern state itself needs to be "civilised" by integrating it with spirituality or morality' (Pantham 1999–183). As Pantham argues, 'Gandhi seems to have inaugurated a post-liberal, ethicalsecular trajectory of relationship between politics and religion in which their relative autonomy from each other is used in moral-political experiments or campaigns for the reconstruction of both the religious traditions and the modern state' (*Ibid*—181). Unfortunately, this aspect of Gandhian

critique of a moral transformation of state has not received much attention from either the critics or the defenders of secularism

Gandhi is dear to many of us, but the question is how far, deep and up we wish to walk with him. One important implication of holding the hands of Gandhi is that we strive to learn about each other's religions. Madan finds it difficult, and he gives the analogy of difficulty of multilingual learning in India (1997–277). Nevertheless, if secularism as a dignified mode of inter-religious and plural existence has to succeed, then learning about each other's religion is a must. As Gandhi tells us

I hold that it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world If we are to respect others' religions, as we would have them to respect our own, a friendly study of the world's religions is a sacred duty. We need not dread, upon our grown up children, the influence of scriptures other than our own. We liberalise their outlook upon life by encouraging them to study freely all that is clean. [] For myself, I regard my study of and reverence for the Bible, the Quran, and the other scriptures to be wholly consistent with my claim to be a staunch Sanatani Hindu. He is no Sanatani Hindu who is narrow, bigoted, and considers evil to be good if it has the sanction of antiquity and is to be found supported in any Sanskrit book (quoted in Sharma 1995, 89-90).

However, the invocation of Gandhi in the reshaping of secularism does not go unchallenged Political scientist Paul Brass (1998) finds the invocation of Gandhı ın the critique of secularism offered by Nandy and Madan problematic For Brass, 'The peaceful pursuit of inter-religious dialogue through the "recovery of religious tolerance" has no meaning for those groups who have seen themselves as oppressed and discriminated against in Hindu society Muslims, backward castes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes' (Ibid 493) However, Brass has to help us understand how even for these groups tolerance is possible without cultivation of the capacity of tolerance at the levels of individuals and groups. Here Gandhi is important because he urges us through the example of his life and death to be ever prepared for the knockings of the other in our house and open our doors As Uberoi argues, 'Gandhi would always look the other in the eye as his second self and offer truthful dialogue and nonviolent conversation without the fear of the possible consequences' (2002. 121) Gandhían agenda is not confined only to the search for 'transcendent inter-religious truths', as Brass sees it Learning to hold the hands of people from other religions here on Earth-in Noakhali, Delhi, Sevagram, Lahore, and Amritsar-is an important part of the Gandhian way of life

Defence of Secularism:

Towards a Spiritual Transformation of Justification and Application

Coexistence and toleration are important aspects of the way of life which Gandhi inspires us to lead. Even defenders of secularism in the Indian context are coming to realise that toleration is the single most important task facing us now insofar as the issue of secularism is concerned. For example, Amartya Sen (1996) argues that the key question for an agenda of secularism is the question of symmetric treatment of religions, groups, individual and other autonomies. For Sen, a secular state has a moral duty to ensure such a symmetric treatment among religions, and he does not agree with critics of secularism such as Nandy that such a practice is inevitably accompanied by the increase in the power of the state to perpetrate violence on people in the name of defending secularism.

How do we cultivate and facilitate the capacity for symmetric and fair treatment to each other on the part of individuals and groups? Sen does not go much farther and deeper, he does not address the ontological preparation that is required for such a mode of life to exist in our society and politics. Similar is the problem with Partha Chatterjee (1994) he titles his contribution on the subject as 'Secularism and Toleration', but does not tell us how we can cultivate toleration among members of different religious faiths. Like Sen, Chatterjee too, finds a panacea only in secular politics. For Chatterjee, by the initiation of a politics of representative democracy among the minorities to run their religious affairs such as the Muslim Wakf Board or the Akal Takht, we can help initiate reform within them and create a more favourable condition for inter-group toleration. Is this enough to ensure toleration? Practice of toleration requires a preparation in the life of individuals for another religion, another world, and this is not a matter of politics alone.

The same challenge of self-cultivation and transformation we find in the defence of secularism offered by other political scientists in India. They defend secularism as part of democratic equality Manoranjan Mohanty (1989) makes a distinction between hegemonic secularism and democratic secularism Mohanty would agree with critics of secularism such as Madan and Nandy that there is a danger in making it only an ideology of the state or elite and would want secularism to be part of ongoing democratic mobilisation and transformation of Indian society Continuing the same engagement with democracy, though a bit more constitutional rather mobilisational, as in the case of Mohanty, Neera Chandhoke (1999) defends secularism as defence of minority rights, which is part of a broader agenda of democratic equality. According to her,

'societies that are deeply polarised on the matter of religion, such as India or Northern Ireland, will need to institute protections for minorities against majoritarianism' (*Ibid* 7) However, Chandhoke also argues, implicitly suggesting *a la* Uberoi, that the problem of humanity cannot be solved 'within a framework of majority and minority' (Uberoi 2002 120)

[T]he right of a minority community to its own identity and practices has to be balanced with respect for the rights of other communities to their own identity and practices [] the struggle for recognition that is simultaneously a search for dignity, directs our attention to the inter-subjective conditions of human realisation' (Chandhoke 1999 19)

To this defence of secularism Rajeev Bhargava (1998) contributes important clarifications by redefining secularism contextually, partly out of the recognition of the problem posed by Nandy and Madan that there is very little sensitivity to religious pluralism in the state-centric discourse of secularism Contextual secularism recognises that 'many forms of separation lie between total exclusion and complete fusion' (Bhargava 1998 516) Contextual secularism, for Bhargava, is political secularism, not ideological secularism, and 'political secularism demands only that every one—believer, non-believer—gives up a bit of what is of exclusive importance in order to sustain that which is generally valuable '(*Ibid* 496)

However, is politics enough in realising political secularism, or does it need an appropriate ethics and spirituality? Is realisation of democratic equality possible only by institution of group rights in the Constitution or does it require appropriate self-cultivation and ontological preparation in self and society for inviting the other into the hard core of the 'political' self. This requires not only a Rawlsian political liberalism and Habermasian inclusion of the other but also a spiritual praxis of self-opening and self-transformation which is conspicuous by its absence in Rawls and Habermas (see Cohen 2001, Giri 2002b) Bhargava's conception of political secularism uncritically reflects a Rawlsian project of liberalism but the challenge now to realise the limits of Rawls. As Connolly urges us to realise,

secularism is the last historical moment in the politics of becoming Rawlsian categories authorise us to acknowledge Rawls wants us to freeze the liberal conception of the person and the secular conception of public space today while everything else in and around the culture undergoes change' (1999 66, emphasis as in the original)

Chandhoke herself writes that 'we need not value pluralism although we are faced with a plural society' (1999 297) This urges to realise that. even if we institute pluralism constitutionally, we may not embody a plural mode of being, or what Connolly (2001) calls 'the ethos of pluralisation' As Connolly would suggest, for embodying an 'ethos of pluralisation' we need to be self-reflective about the modernist privileging of epistemology and open ourselves to ontological journeys. However, this calls for not only a multi-dimensional conception of the pluralism and public sphere as Connolly suggests, but also a multi-layered conception of being which is suggested in Connolly's conception of 'plurivocity of being' However. Connolly's 'plurivocity of being' only stops at the foot hills of Nietzsche and thus it is no wonder that the only other dimension of plurivocality of being that we are opened to in Connolly is the dimension of the infrarational Here a cross-cultural and trans-civilisational philosophical and spiritual engagement can help us realise that it is not only Nietzschean and Deleuzean infra-rational which constitute the other dimension of plurivocality of being, but also Sri Aurobindo's supra-rational and Roy Bhaskar's 'transcendently real self' (Bhaskar 2002: 139) which is characterised by the striving for realisation of non-duality in a world of duality and strife For Sri Aurobindo, the 'supra-rational dimension' of our being enables us to overcome the limitations of our mind, especially our 'desiremind,' and enable us to 'have the joy of contact in diverse oneness' (1950 484)

A multi-dimensionally rich conception of self facilitates the realisation of secularism as multidimensional pluralism by facilitating not only public contestations of one's fundamentals but also a sharing of selves, a creative interpenetration between the self and other, or as Uberoi (2002) would say. an exchange of self, not only of gifts This sharing in self and society is pre-eminently a spiritual activity. Thus, in the political reshaping of secularism as democratic equality, a spiritual foundation is helpful Spiritual processes of transformation are not foundational only in a genealogical sense, but also in a critically constitutive sense of permanent critique and re-figuration Spirituality as a permanent critique of violation of life and the destructive logic of power provides us with a much-needed perspective of 'limits,' that is, the realisation of 'limits of politics' to both the confident and self-critical political scientists of our times (see Lalcau 1992)³ As Roberto M Unger (1987) tells us there are two kinds of sacred-a transcendental sacred and a social sacred and whenever a system of power loses touch with the transcendental sacred it can and very often present oppression as manifestation and justification for the social sacred and there

may not be any critical ground to critique such an unjust arrangement Here, as Alberto Melucci urges us to realise

Instrumental rationality has restored the world to mankind's scope of operation, but it also denies humanity all chances to transcend reality, it devalues everything that resists subsumption under the instrumental action. Society thus becomes a system of apparatuses identical with its own actions and intolerant of any diversity. The sacred thus emerges as an appeal to a possible other, as the voice of what is not but could be. Divested of the ritual trappings of the churches, the sacred thus becomes a purely cultural form of resistance which counters the presumption of power by affirming the right to desire—to hope that the world is more than what actually is (1996–171)

Melucci's critique of instrumental rationality in modernity is in tune with Gandhi's, and it even has a resonance in Max Weber As Madan helps us understand this

A Gandhian critique of secularism in terms of ultimate values and individual responsibility is in some respects similar to Max Weber's concern with the problem of value. What Gandhi and Weber are saying is that secularised world is inherently unstable because it elevates to the realm of ultimate values the only value it knows and these are instrumental values (1997) 237-38).

These critiques point to a spiritual horizon of secularism not as a way of providing a stable ground to the inherent instability of secularism, but as a permanently moving frame of criticism. Understanding this, however, requires not only a transformation in our political reasoning but also sociological reasoning. Sociology has been part of the project of modernity which believes that it can 'provide a privileged or authoritative interpretation of social events,' making it a hegemonic discourse while 'all others, including religious utopias, derivative' (Wuthnow 1991–14). Opening ourselves to spiritual critique and transformations calls for us to 'interpret the significance of contemporary movements in terms of hopes and aspirations of their participants, including their hopes for salvation and spiritual renewal' (*Ibid*)

The Calling of Mutual Learning and Cultivating a Non-Dual Pluralism

If toleration is the most important part of the agenda of secularism then we must lay its seed in our minds and hearts and, for this, it is important for us to learn about each other, know each other in an open-ended spirit of

exploration, dialogue and creation of a new ground of life Such a mode of learning is pre-eminently a spiritual activity Spirituality is about the quality of relationship between the self and the other (see Kurien 1997), in fact, spirituality lies in the heart of relationships or at the mid-point of relationships, to borrow a phrase from Heidegger (see Dallmayr 1996) And, for a more dignified relationship, we must prepare ourselves for it by being engaged in multifarious practices of education, self-cultivation cr *Bildung* (see Dumont 1994) and to understand the spiritual foundations for a secular society

There is a shocking ignorance about each other's religion not only are we not taught about it in our schools because of the secular injunctions against it, nor do we have any opportunity for this in civil society. If we do not know anything about each other's religions, how can we accept each other's religions? It is true that knowing is not enough, but this is an important part of a more inclusive process of feeling and realisation. How do we learn about each other's religions? If the Hindus learn about Islam only from sectarian Hindu organisations, and Muslims learn about Hindus only from sectarian Islamic organisations, then what is the nature of our knowledge of each other? Is this not knowledge of hatred only? Is there any knowledge here where we have already formulated our objects of knowledge in an a priori mode?

In this context, it is helpful to recall my discussion with a follower of a Hindu socio-spiritual movement which believes that we should accept all religions Sarva dharma samabhava (goodwill towards all religions) is not enough, we must have Sarva dharma swikara (acceptance of all religions). This movement also believes that Hindus should accept Jesus as the eleventh incarnation of god and Prophet Mohammed as the twelfth. When I asked him whether he knows anything about Jesus or Mohammed, he told me 'I am sorry that I do not know anything' I told him 'But the city in which you live has so many Muslims. Could not you make a little effort?' Then he told me 'Yes, there is eagerness within me. But it stays at a subterranean level of my consciousness. It is helpful if we have organisations to activate this dormant eagerness within me.' Thus, the challenge of education I am pleading for goes much deeper, and we must have appropriate institutional conditions for learning both at the level of state and civil society (see Sharma 1996)

If secularism has to be redefined as pluralism and multiculturalism, we must confront the epistemic task of living in such a plural and multireligious society (Satya P Mohanty 1998) As has been suggested, learning about other religions, cultures and communities is an important part of this epistemic engagement. However, learning is not simply a

question of epistemology, it involves ontological preparation and work on self-development on the part of self, culture and society

To live in a multi-religious, multicultural and plural society we need a new ethics, politics and spirituality of self-cultivation. It is this focus on self-cultivation which is missing in our discourse on both secularism and pluralism. In Indian sociology, T.K. Oommen (2002) is a passionate advocate of pluralism, but his pluralism remains at the boundaries of groups and it does not have a project of what can be called ontological pluralism. Ontological pluralism calls for realisation of non-dual plurivocality in our beings. Bhaskar (2000 and 2002), who has taken critical realism into new depths and horizons of spiritual strivings, provides us glimpses of non-dual self-realisation as an important part of realisation of ontological and sociological pluralism. For Bhaskar, 'the possibility of human emancipation depends upon expanding the zone of non-duality within our lives, and in the first instance upon shedding our own heteronomy so that we become in a way non-dual beings in a world of duality' (Bhaskar 2002 11)

In order to live in a plural society, we need a new ontology and a new logic of working out our own relationships of reconciliation between variables considered previously as *a priori*stically dual. We need what J N Mohanty calls a 'multi-valued logic' (2000–24) and Uberoi calls the 'the four-fold logic of truth and method' 'in place of the restricted two-valued system of dualism that we have inherited from the European modernity' (2002–118). For Uberoi, in our striving towards the realisation of non-dualism in self and society, we can learn not only from Gandhi but also from Goethe and the Hermetic tradition of Europe ' under a regime of pluralist non-dualism, all human differences and partitions are negotiable in civil society as a "community of sovereignties" because no one reality or truth falsifies another' (*Ibid* 130)

There are several implications of realisation of non-duality for the project of reshaping secularism. One implication is that there is no point in thinking about the relationship between the religious and the secular in terms of an essential opposition. The other implication in this path of engagement is to open ourselves to emergent evolutionary happening and possibility. As Uberoi suggests (which reminds us of Sri Aurobindo) 'the theory of evolution means to us, not chiefly or only development of what is complex out of simple, but also the development of many varieties of existence out of the original few, and without humanity in anyway losing the unity of its universe of discourse' (*Ibid*)

The Calling of an Emergent Evolution: Transcendence and Practical Spirituality

The Calling of a New Transcendence

I would like to submit that the emergence of transcendence as an existence sphere and value sphere of self and society along with 'the standard three some of science, morality and religion' (Schrag 1997 148) is an important part of the contemporary processes of spiritual evolution. Fred Dallmayr's following comments make this clear

There are plenty of signs in our time that a narrowly confined immanence cannot satisfy human longings and aspirations. What needs to be recognised is that longing for transcendence, even a transcendental holism, are vibrantly alive today in many societies on the level of the ordinary life-world-far removed from traditional holistic power structures' (2001–17)

And, as Jean-Luc Nancy argues 'It is precisely the immanence of man to man, or it is man, taken absolutely, considered as the immanent being par excellence, that constitutes the stumbling block to a thinking of community' (quoted in Dallmayr 1998 281)

The process of unification in the emergent sphere of transcendence, as it relates to other domains of our lives, is different from the familiar process of universalistic unification. It is not the simple formula of unity-in-diversity, as Uberoi suggests. It is a process of unification where unity is always a deferred state. As Scharg urges, 'it is a dynamics of unification that is always an "ing", a process of unifying, rather than an "ed", a finalised result' (1997–129)

Scharg builds upon Soren Kierkegaard and urges us to overcome the facile dualism between transcendence and immanence. What is helpful is that in contemporary philosophy and theology we have passionate reformulation of not only the relationship between transcendence and immanence but the very categories themselves. Building on the philosophical and theological works of Jacques Derrida and Luce Irigaray, John D. Caputo writes

The new idea of transcendence turns on a new and positive idea of the finite, not as confining limit, as in Kant's example of the dove that thinks it is confined by the air that sustains it [Rather] transcendence [is] life in the elements, in the enveloping medium in which soul and body 'marry' What then is God's transcendence? Who is the God who comes after metaphysics?

Not a God of infinite distance from earth and flesh, but the infinite freedom to make Godself immanent in the finite, incarnate' (2002 14-15)

Giving a new interpretation to Derrida's famous dictum 'God is wholly other,' Walter Lowe writes

Surely we have the option of reading 'God is other' as 'God is different' and 'God as Wholly Other' as 'God differing-differently'. There would then be the conceptual space to conceive that 'divine transcendence' might refer, perhaps, to God's freedom. Then transcendence would cease to be the opposite of immanence, for a God of freedom would not be isolated in some lofty place but would be capable of being immanent precisely because of being transcendent, that is, free (2002 250)

For Derrida, there is no problem and, in fact, it is a blessing if we do not take the name of God. As Caputo (2002) interprets the Derridean pathway 'Save everything about God save the name of God, lest it become an idol that blocks our way' This Derridean refusal to name God and abandonment is noticed in the Bhakti movements of India. Das (1982a) tells us that saint Purandara Dasa of Karnataka in his poems has described Rama and Krishna as *Idli* and *Dosa* (items of food in South India). In Orissa, while the Panchasakhas—Achyutananda Das, Balram Das, Ararkhita Das *et al*—have transcended many idols and arrived at Jagannatha as Brahma, the blind tribal poet and spiritual prophet Bhima Bhoi in the nineteenth century had transcended Jagannatha himself and made him a watchman in the house of *Sunya* (Emptiness) (Das 2001). This refusal to name god and abandonment has affinity with the path of spiritual seeking and enlightenment charted by Buddha

Irigaray has been another source of inspiration in contemporary rethinking of transcendence as the air we breathe and religion as a process of being divine, reminding us of Sri Aurobindo's pathway of 'life divine' (see Sri Aurobindo 1951, Jantzen 2002) Irigaray provides us a critique of religion—that is, Chirstianity—from the point of view of feminine spirituality A woman, a client in psychoanalysis, tells Irigaray, 'At the point in the mass when they, the (spiritual) father and son, are reciting together the ritual words of the consecration, saying "This is my body, this is my blood", I bleed' (Jantzen 2002 228) Irigaray points to the shifting trajectory of Christian theology, and in the Indian context, Felix Wilfred (1999) presents us the agenda of a situated Christian theology taking into consideration the cultural and spiritual aspirations of Asia For Wilfred, Christianity in the new millennium, not only in India but around the world, should not only assert its prophetic truths but open itself to the mysterious

dimension of religion, spirituality and the human condition 'The Christian attempts to cross over to the other, to the different, has been by and large from the pole of being or fullness. This naturally creates problems, which can be overcome by activating the ability also to cross over from the pole of nothingness or emptiness' (*Ibid* xiii)

The Calling of Practical Spirituality

At this point, the work of German theologian Johannes B Metz (1981) deserves our careful attention Metz says that the quest for unity cannot be achieved on the level of faith but has to be a practical quest, the practical quest of addressing the concrete problems of men and women here on Earth We can utilise this as a turning point for discussing practical spirituality as an emergent mode in many world religions now As Swami Vivekananda had urged us to realise more than hundred years ago, 'the highest idea of morality and unselfishness goes hand in hand with the highest idea of metaphysical conception' (1991 354) This highest conception pertains to the realisation that man himself is God 'You are that Impersonal Being that God for whom you have been searching all over the time is yourself--yourself not in the personal sense but in the impersonal' (Ibid 332) The task of practical spirituality begins with this self-realisation but does not end there its objective is to transform the world. The same Swami Vivekananda challenges us thus 'The watchword of all wellbeing, of all moral good is not 'I' but 'thou' Who cares whether there is a heaven or a hell, who cares if there is an unchangeable or not? Here is the world and it is full of misery Go out into it as Buddha did, and struggle to lessen it or die in the attempt' (Ibid) 4

Practically, spirituality, as articulated by Swami Vivekananda and Metz, can be looked at as an emergent global genre Consider, for instance, the shifting contours of spirituality in contemporary American Society According to Wuthnow (1998), in contemporary American society, there is a shift from a 'spirituality of dwelling' to a 'spirituality of seeking' 'A spirituality of dwelling emphasises habitation God occupies a definite place in the universe' It 'emphasizes an orderly, systematic understanding of life' (*Ibid* 10, 8). However, a spirituality of habitation and dwelling is inadequate to satisfy our multiple aspirations at present when the secured houses of our lives are in a flux. This creates the context for the emergence of a 'spirituality of seeking' which is 'closely connected to the fact that people increasingly create a sense of personal identity through an active sequence of searching and selecting' (*Ibid* 18) Wuthnow makes it clear, however, that a spirituality of seeking in itself is inadequate to come to

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terms with challenges of self-development and responsibility to the other and the world as it offers only 'fleeting encounters with the sacred' (*Ibid* 8) Spirituality of seeking suffers from the danger of making seekers of spirituality satisfied with temporary spiritual sensations and needs to be supplemented by what Wuthnow calls 'practice-oriented spirituality' Practice-oriented spirituality provides multiple grounds for combining spiritual practice and social service Practice-oriented spirituality is not confined to moments of spiritual sensations, it touches all aspects of our life. ' the point of spiritual practice is not to elevate an isolated set of activities over the rest of life but to electrify the spiritual impulse that animates all of life' (*Ibid* 198)

The significance of practical spirituality as a global genre is attested by many observers of the contemporary scene such as Peter Beyer (1994) who argues that 'pure religion' is at a disadvantage in the global society and the solution to its increasing and inevitable privatisation lies in finding 'effective religious applications' Thus, to be of interest to both believers and non-believers, religions have to undertake activities which ameliorate the conditions of poverty and suffering, build the foundations for what Anthony Giddens (1994) calls a 'generative well-being', and through this act of building encourage the participants to develop themselves ethically, morally, and spiritually However, the practical activities of religion are not just 'applied' where application is dissociated from what Kierkegaard (1962) calls a transcendental inspiration of love (see Giri and Quarles von Ufford 2000) The applied activities of practical spirituality manifest themselves through various projects-both the life-projects where the actors are committed to a cause and live in accordance with such a commitment and social projects where religious movements are engaged in a concrete activity as building houses (as in the case of Habitat for Humanity) or building water harvesting structures (as in case of Swadhyaya)-but these projects are not merely instances of 'application', they are manifestations of an integral mode of engagement where applied activities are nourished by a spiritual relationship with the Transcendent

Thus, the applied projects of such movements of practical spirituality are different from projects of mere application which is the case with many development projects of our times (see Quarles van Ufford and Giri 2003). Practice and practical work in such movements differ from the familiar anthropological category of practice outlined by Pierre Bourdieu (1971) and the notion of practical discourse presented by Habermas (1990), as both these categories refer only to rational strategies and rational deliberations of actors and are not linked to spiritual realisation and their transcendent self-awareness. The applied activities of movements

of practical spirituality transcend the familiar dichotomies between transcendence and immanence, and exist at the 'mid-point' of the relationship between transcendence and immanence

This border crossing between transcendence and immanence also involves transformations in the ethico-moral horizons of religions. While in the past, moral considerations meant 'sin, ignorance, etc' (see Beyer 1990–360), now the condition of our life and society—the nature of poverty, social justice, quality of our love—is the subject of ethico-moral engagement. As Vattimo avers, 'We all stand in need of forgiveness, not because we have broken sacred principles that were metaphysically sanctioned, but rather we have because we have "failed" toward those whom we are supposed to love' (Vattimo 1999–90)

Conclusion: Spirituality as a Permanent Critique and Creativity

In this essay, we have explored different pathways of spiritual cultivation for the realisation of plurivocal beings and a multi-dimensionally rich public sphere. We began this essay with a caution from Derrida that we should be on our guard so that we do not authorise in the name of religion In exploring spiritual cultivation for a secular society, am I authorising in the name of spirituality? In this essay, I have not provided a definition of spirituality, spirituality, for me, lies in the in-between lines and embodies a permanent quest for realisation of relationships of dignity However, it would be mistake to look at spirituality as a stable foundation, as the ultimate truth, and as solution to all our problems It is also important not to forget that spiritual movements are often entrapped in logic of authoritarianism and individual salvation (see Krishna 1996) In this context, as we work on spiritual cultivation for a secular society, the challenge before spirituality now is to continue to fight for radical democracy and universality-a universality which transgresses the boundaries of self and other, creates new intimacies and solidarities across boundaries and participates in the struggle for creation and nurturance of transformative institutions of justice, well-being and dignity

Notes

Tocqueville writes, 'If Catholicism predisposes the faithful to obedience, it certainly does not prepare them for inequality but the contrary may be said of Protestantism, which generally tends to make men independent, more than to render them equal' (1961 356)

Admirable exceptions in this field are Uberoi (1996) and Wilfred (2000) who embody a simultaneous and sometimes transgressive engagement with politics, religion, theology and spirituality

- 3 This is as much a challenge for Chandhoke and Bhargava as for Connolly It is striking that Connolly's inspiring conception of 'politics of being' has no engagement with the issue of self-cultivation in terms of, among others, developing kenosis or self-emptying vis-à-vis the will to power Note here the way Connolly defines 'politics of being,' and compare this, without judgment, with the vocation of being articulated by Roy Bhaskar described later in the essay
 - By the politics of becoming, I mean that paradoxical politics by which new cultural identities are formed out of unexpected energies and institutionally congealed injuries. The politics of becoming emerges out of the energies, suffering, and the lines of flight available to culturally defined differences in a particular institutional constellation (Connolly 1999 57)
- 4 Scholars such as Peter van der Veer do not do justice when they equate Swami Vivekananda's practical spirituality with the supposed 'spiritual Hinduism' of the Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP) Consider here the following lines of van der Veer 'On the level of discourse there is very little difference between VHP propaganda and the sayings of the founder of Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Vivekananda' (1996 136) But, in Bengal, many communists, as Girija Bhusan Patnaik, himself a participant in the communist movement during India's freedom struggle, tells us, many participants in the movement in Bengal had drawn inspiration from Swami Vivekanada (see Patnaik's 'Preface' to an alternative biography of Swami Vivekananda written by Das [1996])

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Review Article

On Srinivas's 'Sociology'

Sujata Patel

The posthumous publication of MN Srinivas's Collected essays* is an opportunity to debate his understanding of Indian society as well as his sociology Srinivas played a major role in the institutionalisation of the profession He began publishing his ideas regarding the nature of Indian society soon after independence. He was also instrumental in organising the discipline in two departments, those of Baroda and Delhi Additionally, Srinivas was a public intellectual-from his Baroda days, he took active role in the public domain, wrote in newspapers and popular magazines, and simultaneously developed a point of view regarding the interface of sociologists with public life in which he continued to be active as an educationist and critical commentator. It is no wonder that his ideas, concepts and theories on Indian society have found concurrence among his contemporaries and also came to have popular acceptance. Generations of students have understood and still continue to understand and assess the nature of Indian society through his perceptions

This book contains forty-two essays, organised in eight parts, encompassing almost all aspects of Srinivas's work and is, in many ways, representative of the discipline as it was practiced in India in the 1960s and the 1970s, the period when Srinivas's oeuvre came to be institutionalised as Indian sociology. The book starts with essays that deal with facets of village life drawn from ethnographic material on Rampura, and moves on to those that deal with caste, and then to issues of gender, religion and social change in India. The book also incorporates essays that explore the nature of the discipline and its method, together with some autographical essays. It includes an introduction by A.M. Shah, his student and colleague of many years. Certainly, for the student studying the history of sociology in India, this is a veritable treasure trove.

It is impossible to do justice to all aspects of Srinivas's work. Here I will concentrate on his views regarding the discipline and his ideas regarding content and methods with a view to debate these and thereby assess how these frame his ideas regarding Indian society.

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Sociology and Social Anthropology

Srinivas contends that sociology in India is and should be social anthropology What does this imply? At an apparent level, there are no differences between the two disciplines. The questions asked by Srinivas are questions that both disciplines have answered. For instance, Srinivas's concerns relate to classical questions of sociology. What is contemporary society, in this case Indian society? How does one characterise it? His answers are focused on the future in the same way classical sociologists such as Max Weber or Emile Durkheim and other European sociologists conceived of change from the old to the new. Like them, he is interested in capturing the defining characteristic of the past as it reformulates itself in the future, as is explicated in his book *Social change in modern India* (Berkeley, California University of California Press, 1966)

Additionally, it is not the choice of methods that distinguishes the two disciplines. If Srinivas believed that the fieldwork methods are the most superior, European sociologists have used varying methods to understand the transition from pre modern-to-modern societies, for example, Marxist 'historical materialism' as against Durkheim's 'positivism' or Weber's 'ideal types'

Then, are there no differences between the two disciplines? Is sociology the same as social anthropology? This is not so as we know Although there are differences among sociologists as to what constitutes the distinctive characteristic of the sociological tradition, most would agree that there are three characteristics defining this discipline. The first is a substantive theory of modernity together with an understanding of the process of modernisation. The second is a concern with methods and methodologies Today, this aspect of the discipline is understood in terms of a concern for reflexivity, and various contemporary sociologists have distinct frameworks on this concept and perspective. The third aspect characteristic of the discipline relates to an assessment of the premodern Most sociologists theorise the per-modern in order to understand the modern This was especially true of all classical sociologists. Thus, sociologists in Europe, whatever their theoretical differences, distinguished between the feudal and capitalist or Gemeinschaft-Gesselschaft or mechanical and organic solidarities. On the other hand, social anthropologists studied pre-literate and pre-modern societies, either in terms of culture or structures

What is Srinivas's choice? Srinivas takes an unequivocal position on behalf of social anthropology Many of his early essays delineating this point of view form part of this volume. And, within social anthropology,

he opts for the perspective put into place by Bronislaw Malinowski and A R Radcliffe-Brown In an essay written in 1952 for the *Sociological bulletin*, he declares

(a) modern sociologist regards a society as a system of unity the various parts of which are related to each other. He considers that any single aspect of society abstracted from its matrix of sociological reality, is unintelligible except in relation to the other aspects. And even when he is writing only about a single aspect of a society like religion or law or morals, he brings to bear on his study his knowledge of the total society (p. 460)

In Srinivas, we do not have a two-stage model of structural transformation, that of transition from pre-modern to modern Rather, Srinivas discusses only one structure, that of the caste system which seems to encompass both stages Secondly, in his work we do not have a theory of modernity Instead, we have a theory of social change based on mobility of groups in society, perceived in terms of the two processes of sanskritisation and westernisation

Srinivas, it is clear, collapses sociology into social anthropology, and shows his bias for the traditions associated with social anthropology. When we assess the substantive answers he gives to the questions mentioned above, we realise that Srinivas is not interfacing the two disciplines, rather he is arguing that sociology should be defined as social anthropology. In his work, we do not see a merging of the two disciplines, rather a formal collapse of sociology into social anthropology.

In so doing, Srinivas was following the footsteps laid down much earlier by his first supervisor, G S Ghurye Though Ghurye was the Head of the Department of Sociology in the University of Bombay, the discipline was steeped in anthropological traditions that emphasised the Orientalist perspective Srinivas's later training with the British school of social anthropology only helped to legitimise, this orientation towards anthropology However, his own theoretical proclivities made him also distance himself from Ghurye's Orientalist perspective. It is no wonder, thus, Srinivas states that in order to understand society in India there is a need for social anthropology to distinguish itself from its contemporary. Indian variants such as physical anthropology and ethnology

The collapse of sociology into social anthropology, I would suggest, has implications on Srinivas's sociology. This can be seen in his discussions of the caste system, especially in his work on Rampura (see *infra*). The system emerges as a timeless structure fashioned by the past. Yet, Srinivas was clearly interested in understanding and assessing the changes occurring in modern India. This can be seen in various essays,

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such as 'The Caste System and Its Future', 'Some Reflections on Dowry', 'On Living in a Revolution', 'Nation Building in Independent India', 'Science Technology and Rural Development in India', and in some of his autobiographical essays, especially, 'Practicing Social Anthropology in India' (all published in this volume) These essays point to his interest in the process of modernisation. To this effect, he discusses the way the caste system is changing and argues that the contemporary political process has created the context of the radical reorganisation of the caste system and possibly its demise.

with the emergence of large castes competing with one another to secure secular benefits, the weakening of purity-impurity ideas, and the ideological rejection of hierarchy, both in the Constitution and by huge sections of the population, all point to systemic change. As caste as a system begins to break down, individual castes are likely to continue as they secure a variety of benefits for members in addition to giving them a sense of identity. As India becomes more urban and heterogeneity becomes the norm, ethnic-including caste-identities are likely to assume much greater importance (p. 684)

Is there, thus, a theory of modernisation that Srinivas is articulating? Though not spelt out clearly, the distinction between sanskritisation and westernisation is in one sense a distinction between two kinds of mobility in different periods-pre-modern and modern. He attests that in contemporary India sanskritisation continues to be practiced together with westernisation. It seems post facto that Srinivas does not make a sharp distinction between pre-modern and modern, and that he is, in fact, arguing for a theory of incremental change, rather than that of change with breaks, as do sociologists. It is because he considers this kind of change 'civilisational' in character that his sociology leans on anthropology (and some kind of Orientalism), that his oeuvre cannot distinguish between the two stages of structure What is the implication of this for Srinivas's assessment of the caste system and his ideas on India? In what follows, I discuss two aspects of his work-the first relates to his reading of caste in a village, Rampura, and the second his assessment of contemporary India and the role played by modern processes

The Caste System in the Village: The Merging of the Social and the Spatial

Srinivas's analysis of the structure of caste is best seen in a discussion of it in Rampura, the village, which became 'his' village. In a series of

papers describing this village, Srinivas discusses the caste system by dividing the population by occupation. It is only after that he sees its link with agriculture, and analyses the practices of various castes, in connection to their occupation. The idea here is to show the organic integration of each caste with others and the way these relate with each other, in a functional perspective elaborated by Radcliffe-Brown. The system is shown to have flexibility because of the integration of the parts in the whole.

What is caste? To answer this question, we have to assess one of Srinivas's earlier essays on caste. As early as in 1954, Srinivas published the now classical essay entitled 'Varna' and Caste' (also in this volume). In this essay, he initiates a discussion on the nature of the caste system in India. Clearly, his emphasis on jati comes out of methodological proclivity for the field view. If hierarchy—this volume contains his critique of Louis Dumont's position—does not define caste, then what does? His answer is jati. Second, he suggests that caste is best understood by focusing not only on the middle ranks, but also in the context of internal ranking of each jati in relation to others. Because there is ambiguity of rank and status, it becomes the precondition of mobility. It is in this context that he coins a new concept—that of 'dominant caste', the peasant caste which dominates the village.

How does one understand the caste system in the village? There seems to be an ambiguity in Srinivas's work regarding the relationship between caste and village Firstly it is not clear what is the system, village or caste? One presumes that he is discussing the caste system as the structure defining Indian society. However, the village is also seen as a system For instance, in the essay 'The Social System of the Mysore Village', both the title and the introductory lines suggest this theme 'Rampura is a village of many castes, yet it is also a well-defined structural entity' (2000 40) Again, in another essay, he attests that the traditional caste system 'cannot be disentangled as it operates in the village' (p 237). Does this mean that the caste system is equivalent to the village system? This ambiguity is reflected in the way castes are understood in the village and the way the village is assessed in context to the castes.

What kind of village system do we obtain from the ethnography of Rampura? Srinivas discusses the structures of the castes and shows how these interact in the village. He asserts that, while the traditional structure of the caste system is resilient, it is also adapting itself to new changes, that being inaugurated through the economy and the polity. In his ethnography, he describes these changes. The market is creating new opportunities, new techniques are being introduced, oil mills set up, new

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bus routes started, and new businesses being initiated Srinivas applauds these changes and yet when he is examining these he is freezing them in the village Why? Why is it that there is no description of the way the market links the villages to the towns and cities and to the nation? The nation is organised in terms of the state. Why is the state absent when he discusses the panchayat?

More specially, why is the social reduced to the spatial? Is there an unconscious equation of spatial and social units, that of village and caste with the nation-state and nation? Does this linkage make in Srinivas's sociology the village a 'microsam' of the 'macrosam', India? What are the implications when socialities and territory are reduced to each other? What kind of sociology is constructed when a slice of contemporary is frozen? Does it then lend itself to an interpretation as if it is the past rather than the present?

The concept of village in India, as in other parts of the world, which were colonised, has a specific history in terms of its colonial origins. The concept was constructed and legitimised in the context of a need to use definable spatial areas for administrative control. In the colonial mind, space was integral to power. The Orientalist ideology constructed the Asiatic village system as the cornerstone of the East. Henceforth village and village-level collection of information and knowledge became a mode of understanding the East and its institutions. However, this knowledge was not merely for the archives. It was meant to construct a policy of rule and ultimately to create, a bipolar constellation of power and authority, the state and the village

By the nineteenth century, the village in India had become burdened with many meanings it was an archaic and primary nucleus of Indian society; it had a large degree of political-administrative autonomy, despite paying taxes to various revenue collectors, an economic self-sufficiency, subsistence agriculture, low technology crafts and services, a sense of timelessness of lifestyles, and immobility of people; accompanied by their ideological integration to land

The language of the village remained part of the nationalised ideology However, in the context of the need to frame a national identity it was reconfirmed now as the repository of the civilisational ideas of the Indian nation. Empirical research, when it started in the early decades of the twentieth century, attempted to reinforce the position. The attitude was further bolstered by the practical need of ethnographers to find a place to stay and a place to study In the process, the village became the locale of study, a way to do 'good' ethnography, a place, which is called 'my village' Space became coterminous with social life, paradoxically in a context when colonial policies and capitalist relations had opened up the so-called relative insularity of villages. It is ironic that, though conceptually Srinivas did not agree with the position that the village was a self-sufficient and isolated unit, the emphasis on the village as a unit of ethnographic study made his paradigmatic principles contradict his avowed intentions.

The village acquires in Srinivas's oeuvre a spatial, territorial and structural significance. A localised setting became representative of a whole nation, a whole society. Such a position refracts any attempts to locate the varied networks that bind the village(s) to regions, the country and the global system. If we enlarge our imaginative boundaries to incorporate these networks, it will become apparent that our concerns will then shift to those three networks, labour, capital and communication, which inter-cross and interconnect the villages in the global system, changing thereby the entire set of principles which make the frame of reference for sociological theory

If social processes and external social forces are ignored by the collapse of the social to the spatial, then this collapse also makes possible an exclusion of groups and communities within the nation-state whose culture and practices cannot be explained by the caste system, or the dual system of 'varna' and 'jati', as Srinivas understood it. Tribes, religious and ethnic groups (other than caste), as well as the emerging interest groups that did not conform to the caste principles in their ways of living and functioning did not figure in his work. The issue is not only of conservatism of this approach, but the larger question of exclusion of a large number of groups that constitute the sociological space. And, surely, this should become a question that all sociologists need to assess about their own work? What kind of sociological spaces become distilled when we use spatial categories? Alternatively, what kind of spatial categories need we use so that these can incorporate all the socialities that we are discussing?

Ethnographical Imagination and Assessing Social Change in Modern India

From the late 1960s onwards, Srinivas seems to have moved away from understanding social structure in terms of village. As mentioned above, his commentaries now have a wider canvas and focus on changes occurring in the nation and nation-state. Although the focal point remains the caste system, he is increasingly looking at those aspects of the caste system that are moulding themselves to external and internal changes. As mentioned above, critical to his understanding of caste system is the mobility structures prevalent during the pre-British period and the post-

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British period, and then extended into the post-independence period (for instance, the essay 'Mobility in the Caste System') Here he highlights the role played by economic changes brought by the British (for example, the missionary activities, the start of educational institutions, economic opportunities such as the transport and communication, growth of industries and towns, and new system of law and order) He also highlights the political changes inaugurated after the organisation of caste associations and their conversion to movements such as backward class movements. All these trends have intensified since independence and changed the nature of the caste system.

It is interesting that the index on which he defines social change in India and on which rests his theory of the caste system is that of mobility. While examining mobility in modern India, Srinivas highlights the continuous adaptive character of the system and its ability to adjust to new processes emerging through nation building and state interventions. Many of the essays in this volume allude to the way politics has intervened to change the caste system and led to the growth of backward caste movements all over the country He argues that government policy has now created three strata the forward caste, the backward classes, and the scheduled caste and tribes ('The Caste System and Its Future') These strata are increasingly competing with each other as they try to get a share in the existing resources available in the country. Thus, the caste system of today contrasts sharply with that of the earlier versions of the system, which respected different occupation and ways of living These changes make caste adaptive to new influences, modify and moderate its characteristics, but do not lead it to transform or completely vanish. In Srinivas's work, the structure of Indian society determined by caste emerges as a kind of adjustment mechanism that expands and fits into any changes and which envelops every external influence within its auspices

These perceptions, I would argue, are possible only because of Srinivas's commitment to doing ethnography. Without his emphasis on doing ethnographical work and continuously interpreting and reinterpreting social processes, it would have been difficult for Srinivas to perceive and comment on these changes. It is even possible to argue that a commitment to ethnography seems to dominate his ocuvre over other aspects including the theoretical principles associated with social anthropology and this helps in making his work contemporary. This can be seen not only from the above examples on his assessment of the caste system, but also his understanding of gender

For instance, late in his career, Srinivas became aware of the way gender exploitation was connected to the caste system, and this volume

incorporates three essays on gender From the late 1970s onwards he started writing on gender His two essays in this volume—'The Changing Position of Indian Women' and 'Some Reflections on Dowry'-bring out an interesting shift in Srinivas' theoretical position. In the first essay, he essentially locates women within the village, within the Hindu religionmoral mould of the family Their ritual functions are elaborated and their position never leaves the confines of space and hierarchy Change occurs in terms of education and 'career consciousness' However, while writing on dowry he suddenly becomes sensitive to the inequalities, to the 'status asymmetry' and the perpetual dependence of women that form the basis of such a 'vile institution' as dowry. The way to overcome this system was, according to Srinivas, not just strengthening legislations but starting a wide social movement that shakes the mantle of an unjust structure This points very significantly to Srinivas' empirical sensitivity and highlights the way it helps him to reformulate his earlier formulations and transcend them

No wonder, Srinivas is insistent that an insider best sees the assessment of these structures, their parts and interconnections rather than an outsider According to Srinivas, an insider is more privileged in understanding his own society Arguing against Edmund Leach's contention that anthropologists studying their own society 'do not do it well', he contends that it is the opposite For one, the sociologist studying his own society, is well versed with its language (that is an immense edge), culture that he has experienced all along, and, in the Indian context, the diversity makes this whole insider-outsider question an issue of degree than of kind. One is never completely an outsider in India or completely an insider Against Leach's opinion that initial preconceptions of the insider prejudice research, Srinivas contends that such a handicap may be transcended by way of being a well-trained, sensitive anthropologist.

Srinivas states that

[in] participant observation, the anthropologist has to go much further than the mere collection of information and its analysis, difficult enough though these tasks are He has to try and see the world from the point of view of the people he is studying. This requires a gift of empathy, the ability to place oneself in the shoes of others much in the same way a novelist is able to place himself in the shoes of his characters and view events and situations from their diverse points of views [] Ideally, the anthropologist should be able to empathise with the Brahmin and the untouchable, with the landowner and the landless labourer, and with the moneylender and his debtors (p. 583)

110 Sujata Patel

Did Srinivas empathise with these people? Is his sociology of the people who do not have power or prestige or wealth? The emphasis given to those in the middle rank and their mobility upward, together with insignificance towards hierarchy, have made many commentators comment on the conservatism in Srinivas's analysis

Obviously, the field view of sociology is his major contribution to Indian sociology. However, this field view has been constrained by his theoretical perspective. Certainly, this viewpoint helps him to reorganise his own work and move towards asking sociological questions, and it also gave a generation of students a gateway to move out of earlier ideological bearings of Indology.

What kind of ethnography does one get through such an approach? This issue relates to the way ethnography was related to the functionalist paradigm and framed in the context of the principles of the liberal ideology of the nineteenth century. This ideology argued that state and market, politics and economics were analytically separate and largely self-contained domains each with a separate logic. Epistemically, it made a distinction between subject and object and suggested that the subject, the philosopher and the scientist, should distinguish himself from the object that he observed. Functionalism, by distinguishing the subject from the object, by not ever accepting that the object is the creation of the subject, also emphasised the fact that ethnography so constructed merely mirrors the subject's ideology and advocates research that can become empiricist

What we see in Srinivas is a simple model of social change, a model that perceives social change as dependent on changes in the economy and polity. There is no recognition that the consequences may become causes for the initiation of new processes or that a combination of events and processes may trigger off conflicts which can in turn organise socialities in distinct and different ways. Surely, the problem is also with the way ethnography is practiced uncritically? Today ethnography has acknowledged the power dimension in the relationship between the insider and the outsider and the politics in the construction of knowledge. A lack of criticality can derail any good ethnographical inquiry

What is the implication of this for sociology? Not only do we seem to lose a sense of history, but also, with it, an analysis of colonialism as a force and process of destruction, of capitalism as a generator of change that distributes rewards unequally, and of development and planning as a process of elite-organised ideology of refashioning society. At the end of this brilliant ethnography we remain empty handed for we do not obtain any concepts or theory that can evaluate and understand the contemporary processes of change and conflict in society. In order to have this

repertoire we have to accept that change, especially in the epoch of the world system, is exogenous, market-oriented and one which distributes rewards unequally and thereby constructs localities and regions, classes and ethnic groups in unequal relation with each other

Such a process does not accept spatially created boundaries of social investigation Rather, it demands that social scientists study the processes as they are being reconstructed and through this process organise the frame of ethnographic investigation. The publication of Srinivas's Collected essays allows us to reflect on some of assumptions and theories that frame sociology in India

* M N Srinivas *Collected essays* New Delhi Oxford University Press, 2002, xx + 733 pp , Rs 830 (hb) ISBN 019 565 174X

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Filippo Osella and Katy Gardner (eds.): Migration, modernity and social transformation in South Asia (Contributions to Indian sociology – Occasional Studies 11) New Delhi Sage Publications, 2004, x1viii + 380 pp, Rs 795 (hb) ISBN 0-7619-3209-7

Studies of migration in the social sciences have moved from mere description to trenchant analysis Importantly, however, this shift emphasises and builds upon ethnographies rather than simply ideographic formulations In this respect, the sociological approaches have to be fortified and buttressed by anthropological and geographical ones as the essays included in this volume eminently demonstrate. As to the general approach adopted here, a few points about migration and modernity may be noted The editors and most of the contributors to this volume do not make a hard-and-fast distinction between internal migration and migration to overseas countries. This feature is related to another, there is an equal emphasis here on the places of origin and destination of migrants Incidentally, this fills in a lacuna in migration studies, especially in the study of diasporic movements, where conditions and circumstances of emigration are usually not recorded in sufficient detail. Furthermore, the latter aspect introduces a salutary break in conceptualising migration and its sociological consequences that circulation as the 'to-ing and fro-ing' between localities-not only rural-urban but rural-rural and rural-urbaninternational-is the sine qua non of modern migrations. Additionally, all cases of contemporary migrations reported here are parts of a burgeoning capitalist economy related to processes of globalisation, though, theoretically, social transformation through migration is seen as a long-term historical process not confined to the modern conjuncture alone. In the dynamics of migrations sketched in this volume, tradition and modernity are not dichotomised, not only is tradition reinvented and deployed in the context of new relationships ushered by migration, but there are multiple modernities in diverse situations Surely, given this very wide conspectus for locating migration, modernity and social transformation, the inevitable conclusion is the ambivalent nature of the sociocultural consequences of migratory movements in South Asia

Following a well-crafted Introduction by the editors, an essay on post-colonial Sri Lanka (Jonathan Spencer) takes up the macro-level discourse about state policies of the Sinhalese government leading to massive internal and external migrations of the minorities (mainly Jaffna

Tamils, plantation Tamils and east-coast Muslims) raising issues of minority nationalism in violent conflict with the hegemonic nation-state The remaining essays, except the last one entitled 'Circular migration and rural cosmopolitanism in India' (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan), are ethnographically focussed In three essays, there is an account of predominantly male Muslim migrants from Mirpur in West Pakistan to Britain (R. Ballard), Pakhtun migrants from northern Pakistan to the Gulf (F Watkins) and of Sunni Muslim migrants from the port-town of Mandyı in western India also to the Gulf (E Simpson) Ballard makes the important point that the Mirpuris' otherwise sophisticated and successful entrepreneurial capabilities in Britain have not led to more successful and sustainable outcomes in their home base. Watkins shows the ways in which the Pakhtun migrants to the Gulf states saved money, and the way in which this money was consumed It is a case of 'save there, eat here', showing the circular nature of migration as also the investment of money earned through considerable sacrifices abroad for prestige purpose in villages back home Simpson's essay too is a spin on the strengthening of reformist Islamic identities by younger Mandvi seafarers making money in the Gulf, invested back in competition with older more orthodox practitioners of Islam in the towns Migration to the Gulf is also the theme of a paper on the commoditisation of ritual among the Hindu migrants from Kerala (Osella and Osella) These authors demonstrate in detail how the low caste or new-moneyed sponsors of kuthivottam ritual enter the arena of sacrifices, spectacle and contestations from the money earned abroad

Another migrant identity discussed only marginally in the literature pertains to gender. It is good to find in this collection a paper on Muslim women migrants from eastern Sri Lanka to the Middle East (Thangarajah) These female migrants use imported consumer goods and 'Arabic' practices as a means of empowering themselves. It is a case of 'modernity' where Islamic religious practices play an empowering and progressive role in migrant women's lives. While on the subject of gender, there is an account of rural Rajasthani women's migration to a basti in Jaipur city leading to their greater role in reproductive decision-making, while at the same time experiencing greater constraints in bodily terms as reflected in the medicalisation of their bodies (M. Unnithan-Kumar).

The next five essays in this volume relate squarely to the occupational identities of 'circular' migrants. Three of these essays relates to those working as labourers in Calcutta jute mills (Arjan de Haan), in the central Indian steel town of Bhilai (Jonathan Parry) and as garment workers in Tirupur (G. De Neve). The remaining two essays relate to

migrant agricultural workers one of these focuses on seasonal migration, employer-worker interactions, and shifting ethnic identities in contemporary West Bengal (B Rogaly et al), and the other on rural-urban migration in Bangladesh (R Kuhn). De Haan's study highlights specific gaps in the extant sociohistorical accounts of Calcutta jute workers. He shows, how the lack of empowerment of women workers in the jute mills may be related to their differential and minimal exposure to urban modernity compared with the menfolk, and also discusses generation, religious and caste backgrounds and identities as mediating encounters with modernity Parry convincingly demonstrates how the aristocracy of labour in the steel town of Bhilai are most likely to become fully-fledged townsmen and, somewhat surprisingly, this pattern is not significantly inflected by regional origin. De Neve deals with the classic problem of commitment among industrial workers who are migrants from rural areas Somewhat similar to Parry's findings, he provides evidence to show how rural migrants can as well be conceived of by their urban employers as more committed and hardworking recruits than the socalled 'locals' The article engages with modernity both as industrial employment and life-style, and as a set of expectations and achievements

Finally, the two essays on migrant agricultural workers dealing with seasonal labour to Barddhaman district rice bowl in West Bengal and Kuhn's account of the situation in Bangladesh show, respectively, 'migrations are important in terms of how people think about who they are' and critical concerns over the inherent risks and social costs built into the rural-urban migration process. The last essay by Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan, as mentioned before, has a broad comparative sweep. Readers of this piece are certain to be enlightened by the authors' commendable exemplification of the 'rural cosmopolitanism' paradigm

Ravindra K. Jain

Gail Omvedt: Buddhism in India Challenging Brahmanism and caste. New Delhi Sage Publications, 2003, xiii + 314 pp, Rs 350 (pb) ISBN 0-7619-9665-6

The starting-point of this book, in its Introduction, is B R Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism, which is, no doubt, indispensable to any meaningful understanding of the intricate intertwining of Buddhism with

Brahmanism and caste. The first four chapters deal with Buddhism in its complexity and diversity. The array of issues thrown up by these chapters include the background to the rise of Buddhism in the middle of the second millennium BCE, a period when, as the author would have, crucial socio-cultural developments took place throughout the world, the related socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the society of the time, its political context, and the competing religious-ideological trends within which Buddhism functioned, basic teachings of Buddhism; formative role of Buddhism for nearly a millennium, its relationship to caste its connection with India's leading role in trade and other international linkages in the 'first global age', the question of how religious-philosophical systems foster or discourage scientific and technological advances; and changing forms of Buddhism in India, which includes both popular Buddhism as contrasted with the Buddhism of the monasteries.

The main arguments in these chapters are that the teachings of the Buddha (as given in the early Theravada Pali scriptures) place a unique emphasis on control of the passions, on achieving freedom from 'craving' as crucial elements in achieving liberation from sorrow and suffering; that in contrast to both Brahmanism and its main ethical competitor Jainism, it provided for a simple but positive morality for lay followers as well as those who became bikkus or renouncers, that Buddhism contrasted radically with Brahmanism in regard to the caste system (that is, the controversy over the role of birth versus action in determining social status), the origin and role of the state, the approach to merchants and farmers as social groups, and the position of women, and that Buddhism fostered a dynamic, open society in contrast to Brahmanism's orientation to a hierarchical, village-focused, and caste-defined social system

While Chapter 5 is on the defeat of Buddhism in India, Chapter 7 is on its first revival in the nineteenth century. The defeat is attributed primarily to the alliance between Brahmans and the kings who used 'Brahman administrative service' and got their status as Kshatriyas confirmed without any of the burdens of being moral kings; and violence in the establishment of the dominance of Brahmanism. The revival is explained in the context of colonial challenges and Indian responses when, among others, the great social radical Jotiba Phule emphasised and used the meaning and message of Buddhism for emancipation of the low castes from the thraldom of the caste system and the social, moral, and intellectual hegemony of Brahmans and *Brahmans proximi* castes, followed by individual conversions and their limitations, and the dalit-

based Tamil Buddhist revival in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Chapter 6, on the complex question of impact of Buddhism in the centuries following its overt disappearance, deals with the relationship between Buddhism and the bhakti movements as a crucial issue as these were major religious currents among the people in the medieval Indian society In doing so, it throws light on the efforts of Nandanar in the Tamil bhakti tradition, Kabir and Ravidas in north India, Tukaram and Cokhamela in Maharashtra, Mırabaı and the role of women in bhaktı movements, and some aspects of the Orissa bhakti movements. The chapter argues that the social situation during the bhakti movements, which resulted in repression and perhaps murder of radical bhaktas such as Tukaram, and the efforts to totally wipe out the contributions of dalit bhaktas such as Nandanar and Cokhamela, illustrated the dominance of Brahmanism and the hardening of caste social structure in medieval India Chapter 8 brings Ambedkar's legacy to its logical culmination, and describes the import of his interpretation of Buddhism, and the massive dalit conversions to it of the 1950s and after in the context of their significance for the future of Buddhism in India

The concluding chapter returns to the questions raised in the Introduction, and argues that an interpretation of Buddhism without the framework of *karma*/rebirth, interpreting *nibhana* (*nirvana*) in thisworldly terms focusing on the psychological and moral development of the individual and the 'reconstruction of the world' does indeed make sense, that Ambedkar's Navayana Buddhism can thus find a genuine base in the original teachings of Goutama, and serve as a powerful force for reconstructing society in a new and challenging millennium

To conclude, the recent large-scale conversion of dalits to Buddhism, albeit as a protest movement, and the tempo, which this movement seems to maintain is indeed a challenge to Brahmanism and caste, both of which are anachronisms and an anathema to contemporary Indian society. It is to the credit of Gail Omvedt that by giving the readers the massive literature on Buddhism in its quintessence in a slender volume, she has not only made a major academic contribution, but also and probably more importantly, given a meaning and message to the dalit masses who are still victims of extreme forms of social prejudices, atrocities and discriminatory and exclusionary practices—that here is an effective alternative which your messiah had shown you, follow it if and when you want and uphold your civil and social rights. The book is well written and well documented, and the author has consistently sustained her arguments and findings

On the back cover of the book, Hinduism is equated with Hinduiva by printing 'Hinduism (or Hinduiva)' As there is a world of difference between the two, this error needs to be corrected

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Govind Kelkar, Dev Nathan and Pierre Walter (eds) Gender relations in forest societies in Asia New Delhi Sage Publications, 2003. 325 pp, Rs 550 (hb) ISBN 0-7619-9783-0

Gender equality and management of natural resources, such as forests, constitute two important issues which have emerged significantly since the 1970s Conceived in their meaningful unity, these two issues have been addressed in the book under review which presents the fieldworkbased case studies of some forest-dwelling societies in China, India, Thailand and Malaysia The contributors have looked at the changes in gender relations in four situations (1) where there has been an imposition of colonial or national state rule over forest communities and the takeover of forests for central purposes, (11) where revolts-historical and contemporary-have taken place to re-establish local community control over the forests, (111) where the states have responded to these autonomy movements by shifting to devolution as a policy, and (iv) where women's inclusion in local forest management committees is becoming more a policy norm now In their introduction, Govind Kelkar and Dev Nathan bring together various themes and issues discussed and analysed in the book

The book is divided into two sections 'History and Myth' and 'Forest Management' The five chapters in the first section attempt to unravel the evidence relating to gender roles and discrimination in history, culture and myths K S Singh's evidence regarding women as hunters reveals that 'there was never any prohibition, directly or indirectly expressed or enforced against hunting by women in some situations' (p. 59) Yang Fuquan examines how the 'fireplace' symbollises gender divisions and hierarchies among Yunnan nationalities Xi Yuhua analyses the symbolism associated with 'Shu'—the category of Naxi nature deities—by using the concept of 'archetype' developed in Jungian psychology

Cholthira Satyawadhana's study of the matrilineal Lua in Northern Thailand narrates how Lua women's knowledge of salt extraction was appropriated by outsiders, and the Lua's confrontation with the forest conservation policy of the Thai government. Based on a study conducted in Jharkhand, Samar Bosu Mullick examines the correlation between the growth of inequality in gender relations and the belief and practice of condemnation of women as witches

The second section, consisting of six chapters, examines the interface between dynamism in gender relations and forest management in the context of socio-cultural traditions of forest societies and the influence of the state policies. He Zhonghua's comparative study of two villages in Mosuo matrilineal society (in China) analyses the differential impact of village economy on the local forest resources. The study also brings out the role of matrilineal system, conventional regulations and religious strictures in the protection of the forests

In their study of two village communities—Longquan and Enzong (in China)—Yang Fuquan and X1 Yuhua observe that the traditional system of collective/joint forest management, beliefs and practices of forest worship have positively contributed in preserving and regenerating forests in the villages where women had a very close relationship with the forests However, due to the Chinese administrative reforms, frequent political movements and the Cultural Revolution, there has been a loss of women's traditional status and erosion of Naxi systems of traditional community self-management and control of forests. In a similar vein, Paul Porodong observes that, with the end of the traditional institution of *Bobolizan* (an institution that upheld women's status and authority in the community) in Sabah (Malaysia) under the influence of colonial government and administration and the expansion of Christian missionaries, there has been a transition in gender relations from egalitarian to a malecentred system along with a change in attitude towards natural resources

Focusing on gender inequality among the Khasis, Tiplut Nongbri reveals a dense link between gender, patriarchy and the state, with ethnicity as the mediating element among the three Indra Munshi's study of Warlis of Western India reveals how the changes in their economy have deepened the gender inequalities and how loss of forests has had a negative impact on women With the help of case studies conducted in Uttarakhand, Madhu Sarin examines the factors that trigger changes in women's position in a patriarchal forest-based society and the effect-tiveness of devolution policies

As a whole, the book looks into the manner in which gender relations have been transformed in the transition from the matrilineal to the patrilineal systems among the indigenous peoples, and provides a broader understanding of changes in the economy and society of forest-dwelling communities. It also informs us about the society-specific socio-cultural traditions in which the gender relations are embedded. The impact that

the forces of change—both internal and external—have on gender relations is critically analysed. In general, expanding the state space into forests and the privatisation of forests are noted as having had a negative impact on gender relations. Women's voices of resistance against male appropriation of traditional power and their struggles against the state efforts to centralise forest management have been highlighted. Furthermore, women's centrality in the provision of livelihood, women as main non-timber forest product collectors, their traditional knowledge of forests, their role in community based forest management and the space created for them by the devolution policy is recognised. The inferior position of women in male-dominated gender relations is identified as an inhibiting factor.

Apart from being useful to students/researchers in the areas such as gender/women's studies, forest-resource management and studies on tribal communities, the book provides valuable inputs for gender-sensitive forest-management policies

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G.R. Madan Casteism, corruption and social development in India New Delhi Radha Publications, 2004, ix + 200 pp, Rs 375 (hb) ISBN 81-7487-341-4

The policy makers, planners and academicians in India have addressed the problems of casteism and corruption. However, they have seldom touched the issue of social development in relation to these problems. In the book under review, G.R. Madan makes an attempt to fill this gap. He seems to be very much concerned about the problems of casteism and corruption, as he has given suggestions and recommendations for their eradication in almost all chapters besides the concluding one

The caste system is regarded as a major obstacle in modern democratic society. However, it is not the caste system *per se* which has created problems, but casteism—a kind of ethnocentric mindset, or blind loyalty to one's caste—that has ruined all hopes for an egalitarian society. Many social reformers have advocated inter-caste marriage to get rid of the caste system. However, no significant success has been achieved in this direction. It is not only the marriages that are arranged on the basis of caste, even marriage halls are set up on caste lines. Madan has rightly observed that casteism is not just confined to villages, even cities are the

strongholds of casteism, as hostels, housing societies, marriage halls and clubs are run on caste lines

While Madan's proclaimed concern is with casteism, the focus of the book is more on the origin of caste system, a number of theories explaining it, starting from the laws of Manu to the clash of cultures and contact of races theory of S C. Roy, have been discussed at length There is absolutely no analysis of the factors that lead to casteism A detailed account of this would have been useful, as the book is primarily prescriptive in its orientation

Even so, the measures suggested for the eradication of casteism and untouchability are far-reaching. The approach towards tackling these issues is holistic, it focuses on both land reforms and religious reforms. Among others, Madan suggests banning the scriptures that advocate caste system, abolition of surnames and titles, technological improvements in degraded occupations—such as the use of wheelbarrow and the development of sewage system—and redistribution of land

Corruption is another major problem that has sabotaged the development process in our country. It has adversely affected all our public institutions and made the state machinery weak and ineffective. It is a product of the mores of an acquisitive society, where financial values are uppermost and the pragmatic sanction of conduct lies in its pecuniary sense.

Madan attributes corruption as a consequence of the failure of religion to lead people towards a simple and aesthetic life. Some people amass wealth in an illegal way, which they use for luxurious living—on palatial houses, expensive cars, gambling, and illicit sex—at the cost of public funds Based on this kind of presumption, Madan gives thrust to the role of religion in combating the menace of corruption To eradicate corruption, Madan suggests a two-fold strategy that consists of (a) an effective machinery to enforce laws against corruption, and (b) strengthening moral values through religious institutions

The last theme of the book is social development Since recently, it is not only economic development that is taken as an indicator of development, but social development is also accorded a due weightage. In fact, economic development with no concern for social development is dubbed as development without a human face. Social development, that encompasses a wide range of issues—social and economic equality, universal education, health and food security, provision of standard housing and sanitation conditions, and moral development—constitutes the core of welfare state.

The concept of social development as used in this book is broad and comprehensive Madan disagrees with the Human Development Index

which has been developed by the United Nations Development Fund, as it does not lay any emphasis on moral development and social equality. Equal opportunities, redistribution of wealth and growth-with-justice mark social development

It is in this context, that casteism and corruption emerge as threats to social development. Casteism hinders the realisation of social equality and equal opportunities for all, whereas corruption widens the gap between the rich and the poor, leads to the failure of welfare programmes, and results in amoral behaviour such as gambling, illicit sex etc. Thus, casteism and corruption have become obstacles for the economic, social and spiritual well-being of the people

The theme of the book, 'casteism, corruption and social development', signifies the implications of these three to Indian society However, the book lacks analytical rigour, the explanation of these issues is commonsensical, if not rhetorical The issues could have been addressed sociologically by taking advantage of the large body of available data Also, with casteism, corruption and social development being handled as separate issues, there is hardly any attempt at seeing their interrelations.

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G.R. Madan: Indian rural problems New Delhi Radha Publications, 2002, xix + 754 pp, Rs 1050 (hb) ISBN 81-7487-259-0

The book under review provides a comprehensive and critical survey of rural development programmes. Divided into seven parts, it systematically presents various aspects of village life. Part One traces the history of rural development in India. The gregarious instinct among human beings, the tribal tie, the common danger from wild beasts, and the recognition of necessity and usefulness of mutual help and co-operation are identified as factors that favoured the rise of compact village communities. The village council or gramsabha, the most important organ of the village government, the loksabha and samiti which played an important role in the Vedic period do not seem to figure prominently in the Brahman period. The Jataka stories reveal that at the head of the village executive was the headman of the village, and his duties were to collect the revenue and to defend community with the help of local men

Part Two deals with programmes of agricultural development, which includes the production of various crops, credit, supplies and marketing, land reforms, landholdings and management, irrigation and power, ani-

mal husbandry, transport and communication Part Three examines the problems of rural workers and rural industries, including the problems of poverty, unemployment and minimum needs programmes Part Four focuses on rural institutions which include the cooperative movement, Panchayati Raj, religious institutions, caste system, joint family, rural leadership, etc

Part Five is concerned with rural welfare services covering education, health and family planning housing, social welfare services for the weaker groups such as children, women, youth, backward classes, etc Part Six covers rural reconstruction and planning And Part Seven discusses the developments which have taken place since 1980, that is during the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Five-Year Plan periods

The book is a well-versed record of Indian rural sociology, its problems and solutions The canvas of the book is very broad, but the concept and problems of rural sociology are presented in a well-organised manner Almost all problems of rural India—like agricultural development, land reforms, land holding and management, irrigation and power supply, animal husbandry, transport and communications, and poverty and unemployment—have been discussed in the book. As such, this book is a valuable contribution to the field of rural sociology and rural welfare.

Rajan Misra Agra

G.R. Madan: Sociology of development An Indian perspective New Delhi Allied Publications, 2003, xx + 526 pp., Rs 300 (hb) ISBN 81-7764-437-8

Development has been a topic of intense discussion not only among academics but also among bureaucrats, NGOs, policy makers and planners in both developing and the developed countries. As a concept, development is perceived with different dimensions and applied in endeavours related to directed, induced and planned social change. It seeks people's participation in its sustainability irrespective of the nature of development of a country. The book attempts to highlight some of the important dimensions of development, namely, social change and problems of development, welfare state and democratic planning, and changes in planning strategies. It is organised in three parts, and each part has addressed the crucial issues related to development, planning and its strategies respectively. The contents of the book are systematically organised and lucidly presented under each part.

The author has clearly defined the concept of social change and its various facets. On aspects related to induced change in India, he has made clear the British policy and its impact on Indian manufacturers. He has also touched upon the induced change in free India since the establishment of Planning Commission. Dealing with factors of industrial development, he indicates the social structure and attitude of common people which foiled the industrial growth. Urbanisation and its various problematic dimensions are also referred to by the author. In rural development, especially agricultural development, the role of government is highlighted and the provision of credit facilities is stressed. The changes in social organisation touched upon include family and polity. The conditions and consequences of change, problems of allocation of resources, and the need to arrest population growth are all lucidly presented.

Part Two covers the notion of welfare state, its genesis, functions, advantages and disadvantages. The importance of planning and techniques with regard to economic and social development are given due place in the discussion. The chapter on 'Democratic Planning and Organisational Structure' gives insights on the political institutions in general and the role of democracy in particular.

Part Three presents a comprehensive description of the objectives of Five-Year Plans and industrial policy statement of 1980 and its impact on various industries like *khadi*, handicrafts, and agriculture. The basic minimum needs and removal of poverty, health care provisions, and public distribution system are discussed while dealing with planning strategies. The role of United Nations with regard to the minimum needs is emphasised. Due coverage is given to environment and its sustainability in the present era. The role of panchayati raj institutions, voluntary organisations and civil society institutions in development are lucidly analysed.

Readers, however, might feel that certain dimensions having a direct bearing on development are missing in the book. They are, for example, micro-level planning, participatory development through PRA/RRA/PLM, etc. techniques. The quadrangular dimension—of people, NGOs, bankers and academics—of analysis is missing. The same is the case with the application of science and technology in integrated development. Gender dimension in development is not also adequately covered. Notwithstanding these limitations, this book is a useful reference work on the sociology of development.

Jagannath Pati: Media and tribal development New Delhi Concept Publishing Company, 2004, 275 pp, Rs 500 (hb) ISBN 81-8069-068-7

This book examines the role of media in tribal development with reference to Jharkhand state. It highlights the social relevance of radio broadcasting service from the point of view of the tribal listeners.

Jharkhand is divided into two parts Santhal Pargana and Chotanagpur Chotanagpur, the study area, houses richly wooded mountains, valleys, rivers, water falls, rich mineral wealth and indigenous tribal communities such as Hos, Mundas, Oraons, Cheros, Kharias and others Three blocks—Rania, a remote tribal area consisting of mainly Mundas; Mandar, a small town consisting of mainly Oraons, and Hatma in Ranchi, a city consisting of Oraon and Mundas—were selected for intensive study. In each of the above blocks, 100 tribal respondents each comprising of children, youth, women, men and aged have been selected for sample survey Besides, 30 media personalities, leaders, anthropologists and tribal leaders have been interviewed in order to arrive at appropriate conclusions and suggestions regarding the role of broadcasting in tribal development

The book is neatly and logically organised into eight chapters. The first six chapters serve as background and provide conceptual discussion on various interrelated themes such as development, research methodology, review of literature on communication, broadcasting media and tribal development, mass communication, radio strategies for development communication, the new development paradigm, communication strategy for tribal development, and broadcasting media, besides the area and profile of tribes in Ranchi and surrounding areas

Chapter 7-'Impact of Broadcasting on Tribals', the only empirical part of the book, deals with the background, awareness and reactions of the tribals with reference to different aspects of radio broadcasting. The author notes that more the backwardness and illiteracy, more was the lack of response or avoidance to the questions. Furthermore, low agricultural productivity, fragile ecological balance, health and medical problems such as malnutrition, malaria, TB, infectious diseases, water borne diseases; and addiction are the major hurdles for their socioeconomic progress and hence their participation in radio listening or mass media. However, a good number of respondents opined that they listen to radio much more frequently during special situations such as national calamities, general elections, political developments and sports commentaries. Entertainment was by far the largest function of the radio, which is noteworthy from the vantage point of media production and development communication policy.

The author recommends increased use of folk media and folk artists, identification of linguistic areas, down-to-earth characters and tribal culture, development broadcast units and the NGO participation. There is lot of research and literature available on tribes and mass media separately, but the present work, which combines both areas—radio (mass media) and the tribal society—is a rare and welcome addition to the literature on mass communication studies

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Krishna Chakrabortty: Family in India Jaipur Rawat Publications, 2002, 307 pp, Rs 595 (hb) ISBN 81-7033-710-0

In Family in India, Krishna Chakrabortty attempts to clear some of the confusions and contradictions in the literature on family in India. Her work is insightful and refreshing as it goes beyond the Indological, textual and legal understanding of the concept of family, so common in the earlier studies on family in India, and seeks a more operational working definition of family 'as an interactional unit with diverse and dynamic intra-family relations and the nature and extend of family solidarity among the member of the household units'. This family solidarity is not assumed but distinguished at various levels like the ties of cooperation and obligations, co-residence, commensality, the distant ties of obligations and the ties of recognition. For Chakrabortty, not only are the criteria like commensality and co-residence important, but also of significance are the nature of interrelations and patterns of interactions among the members of the family as well as their behaviour, opinions and perceptions

The book is based on data collected from 274 married women who lived in joint or nuclear households, in rural or urban areas of West Bengal. Four types of households were selected from the Kolkata metropolis, and two villages in the Hoogly district contiguous to the city of Kolkata. urban joint (92), urban nuclear (82), rural joint (50) and rural nuclear (50). The first three chapters of the book are theoretical, focusing on the views of western and Indian sociologists on family in a changing society and on the Indian joint family and its dimensions Basing on these views, Chakrabortty elaborates on the 'functional solidarity' among the members of household as the major focus of enquiry—the functional solidarity being the 'unit of analysis' and selected households as the 'units of observation' Chapter four attempts to measure this 'functional

solidarity' of the joint family, and chapters five, six and seven discuss 'functional solidarity' in households in general, in nuclear households, and in joint family respectively Chapter eight deals with mobility and joint family solidarity, and chapter nine reflects on the future of joint family The summary and conclusions are presented in the last chapter

The pioneering works on family in India by sociologists like IP Desai (Some aspects of family in Mahuwa A sociological study of jointness in a small town, 1964) demonstrate the relevance of defining family in terms of 'criteria of jointness'. Chakrabortty elaborates these criteria to show that it is not enough to undertake a structural classification of families, but it is also necessary to define and specify the attributes of nuclearity and jointness and search for the same in both types of family structures—for jointness in nuclear households and for nuclearity in joint family

As different from the Indological understanding of family, sociologists like A M Shah (Household dimension of family in India, 1973, The family in India, 1988) and Pauline Kolenda (Regional differences in family structure in India, 1987) have attempted to clarify the definition and trends of change in the family system by analysing the concept of 'household'. Chakrabortty too, uses the term 'household' in her study. According to her, 'household' refers to the 'co-residential and commensal groups of patrikin' as different from 'family', a wider group of members tied through relationships of kinship, birth and marriage Similarly, for her, there is a difference between 'joint family' and 'joint household', joint family being a multi-functional group and joint household being one of the dimensions of joint family

In understanding the survival of joint family and its future, the concept of 'developmental process'—more commonly referred to as 'developmental cycle'—in family studies is considered by Chakrabortty, but in a different way She shows that not one uni-dimensional development process (joint family—nuclear family—joint family), but several such processes are in operation, which can be explored, not from legal texts or scriptures but from empirical analysis

Chakrabortty suggests that joint households are very much a reality today, though with certain changes in the household authority structure, division of labour, pattern of intra- and extra-familial interactions and interrelations. Although the mode of functioning of joint households varies across societies, she concludes that an inquiry into the functional solidarity of families suggests a trend towards the emergence of the type of family where emphasis is on functional ties, affectional bonds, exchange of aid and services among the kin. The preference today is for small joint households or, as Chakrabortty prefers to call, the 'modified

extended family', that is, more of lineal-joint or supplement-nuclear types.

In these types of families, the husband-wife-children nucleus, that often maintains its distinct existence, even in the structurally joint households, is becoming stronger especially in the urban areas with the emergence of new consumption patterns, style of life and modes of socialisation. Besides this, the study observes that urban nuclear households show a tendency towards neolocal residence in place of patrilocal residence, and towards the emergence of a bilateral kinship system where the ties with the wife's natal kin are becoming sufficiently strong

The book is full of data, and responses to almost every question put to the respondents are quantified for arriving at conclusions. In some cases, the reasons for these conclusions are assumed rather than explained (for example, it is assumed that gift exchanges are directly related to the warmth of relationship) or derived concomitantly (for example, more the visits made by wife's relatives, greater is her power and domination, more the husbands are tilted towards their wives and/or children, the weaker the joint family solidarity). The insights drawn from personal narratives and case studies on a topic that deals with the behaviour and opinions of women in the households are almost negligible

One does not find much by way of context and background of the respondents (except quantified data like age, education, employment etc.), like the life in rural Bengal or Bengali culture that impinges upon women's decisions rather than their personal choices and decisions No information about the caste of the respondents is given. Owing to many differences between rural and urban areas, comparisons are difficult, and taking similar attributes of solidarity for such comparisons could be problematic. This may lead to partial representation of the phenomenon Chakrabortty refers to Bhatridwittya (a ritual celebrated by Bengali women wishing prosperity for their brothers) This ritual is shown to be getting weak among the rural joint households, where least change is expected. But she also highlights that rural women (88 % in this case) are devising mechanisms (using ritual here) to increase contact with their natal families, an observation different from her conclusion that it is in urban areas that women are getting closer to their parents' families. There are many rituals and festivals (for example, raksha bandhan, hariyali teei, etc.) in rural north India where married women customarily pay visit to their natal families or are visited by their family members in their conjugal households. Thus, the observation that, the greater frequency and regularity of contacts of wives with their natal kin is an indicator of declining solidarity in joint households appears to be more axiomatic

These flaws, however, do not detract from the value of the book in clarifying the various concepts and theories in the sociology of family in India

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Maitrayee Chaudhury (ed.): The practice of sociology New Delhir Orient Longman, 2003, x + 435 pp, Rs 695 (hb) ISBN 81-250-2512-X

This volume comprising fifteen thought-provoking articles, including the editor's methodical introduction, tries to draw our attention to the deeprooted crisis in Indian sociology the yawning gap between theory and reality, and the teacher and the taught. It observes that the social relevance and meaningfulness of the discipline in contemporary times are seriously questioned particularly by the students who 'often express their complete inability to make connections between what is taught in one class and another or between what is happening around us and what is being taught'. The volume makes a serious attempt to rationalise such observations by examining 'the practice of teaching and research in the domain of Indian sociology' against the background of socially relevant and empirical issues related to university curriculum, pedagogy, caste, culture, women, development and environment

In the introduction, the editor creates a discursive space for such an exercise by rationalising the intent and importance of the volume and, thereby, connecting the articles thematically into a logical whole. She makes a strong case against those who locate causes of the crisis in the falling standards of students and teachers/researchers

The articles by Rudolf Heredia, Avijit Pathak, Mohammad Talib and Savyasachi and George Jose deal with curriculum and the prevailing practice of pedagogy in Indian sociology Pathak opines that students of sociology find the discipline hardly different from commonsense. He feels that teaching of sociology must make clear that (a) value neutrality is a myth, and (b) there is a positive correlation between the instrumental rationality based cognition and domination over man and nature. According to Heredia, there is a strong need to reform the curriculum by incorporating in it a value-based and non-violent pedagogic paradigm for ethical transformation and renewal. The current curriculum, Talib and Savyasachi and Jose observe, is a frozen, bureaucratised, one-dimensional and asymmetrical document which reflects on only one aspect of

reality and, thereby, does not enable students to think differently and innovatively about socially relevant issues

The papers by Ravinder Kaur and Indra Munshi respectively deal with the questions of poverty and environment vis-à-vis Indian sociology Kaur argues that Indian sociology could have enriched the study of poverty by giving a cultural dimension to the whole exercise, however, it has always overlooked the problem, even in its long tradition of fieldwork based village studies. Likewise, Munshi observes that Indian sociology is conceptually equipped to study environment and its various ramifications particularly against the background of its developed tradition of social movement studies, however, the issue is still peripheral and, therefore, by and large not investigated in the domain of the discipline

Satish Deshpande and Edward Rodrigues have argued in their papers that the significant issues pertaining to the institution of caste have not been dealt with in Indian sociology. One such significant issue is caste inequality which, as Deshpande writes, has not only 'remained a relatively underdeveloped area, its marginality is itself taken so much for granted that it becomes invisible' For Rodrigues, another significant caste-related issue is untouchability and the movements against it. He argues that the discipline has been maintaining a noncommittal position towards the dalit issues right from the beginning. Hence, the need is to 'subalternise' sociology of caste by infusing within it the ideas of dalit consciousness and literature

Seemanthini Niranjana and Sasheej Hegde indict sociology for universalising a particular meaning of culture, which precludes our understanding 'the lived and diverse cultural practices' of different groups. They see a total disjunction between the lived cultural practices and teaching and research on culture in sociology, and point to the need to recast sociology by slotting in the lessons from the discipline of cultural studies. Likewise, Maitrayee Chaudhury argues that the popular understandings of culture in sociology, which are quite abstract and disembodied from reality, dispute the idea of plural or diverse and structurally contingent culture and, by doing so, generate a simulated structure of meanings that does not allow us to comprehend the unequal and exploitative character of cultural globalisation. For her, any meaningful understanding of cultural globalisation requires the contextualisation of the problem in the matrix of political economy of international division of labour.

In their papers, Mary John and Sharmila Rege evaluate Indian sociology from the gender perspective. They observe that Indian sociology has been a static discipline which has an essentialist and closed under-

standing of gender Therefore, it hardly helps in making a sense of the gender issues, such as dowry, dowry deaths, personal law, Shah Bano case, sati and female infanticide, and the movements in which these issues are being projected. They feel an urgent need to streamlining the epistemology and ontology of Indian sociology by drawing upon lessons from women's studies Drawing upon the concept of 'Matrilineal Puzzle', Tiplut Nongbari has tried to understand kinship structure and gender relations among the matrilineal tribal groups of northeast India. the Khasi, the Garo and the Lalung She argues that there have been attempts to camouflage the operation of patriarchy by developing a particular understanding of matrilineal descent group in sociology/social anthropology For her, the concept of matrilineal descent group does not only give a false impression of aura and prestige around women, it also helps in their subjugation. In such groups, men have successfully isolated women from the realm of political power by conferring descent rights on the mother and, thereby, imposing strict moral codes of behaviour on them.

In the concluding paper, André Beteille has commented on the research practice being pursued by the younger generation of Indian sociologists. He puts across his concern at their frantic search for newness in research without 'a careful, detailed and methodical scrutiny of existing knowledge—its concepts, methods and theories'. He observes that it is always good to pursue the search for new ideas, wherever they may be found, according to ones own research interest and inclination. However, this is not enough one 'must then undertake the slow and laborious effort of finding a place for it in the existing practice of the discipline'. There should be 'a proper appreciation of the relation between tradition and individual talent in sociology'

This book reflects the dominant thinking of the younger generation of Indian sociologists in relation to the practice of research and teaching in the discipline. Their ideas are pioneering and stimulating

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Manorama Savur: And the bamboo flowers in the Indian forests What did the pulp and paper industry do? (Two-volume set) Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003, xxiv + x + 715 pp, Rs 1500 (set) (hb). ISBN 81-7304-413-9 (set)

This set of two volumes is the outcome of six years intensive research based on vast secondary data and rich empirical data from extensive

fieldwork covering eighteen pulp and paper industries spread over nine states. While it is a macro-study, every case covered in it has been analysed in depth Based on sound assumptions and well-defined objectives, it examines the impact of pulp and paper industry on bamboo forests, and the destruction of bamboo forests in the catchment areas of the industries. It provides valuable insights into the policies and other important contingencies which led to the denudation of the forests. It is also concerned with the impact of the man-made forests, particularly of eucalyptus, created by the pulp and paper industries. The study combines historical method with ethnographic analysis to understand the ramifications of the paper industry, destruction of forests since colonial times, relations between the forest department and the paper industry and between industrial capitalists and governments, and so on

The work has been divided into eight chapters besides the introduction and the conclusion Each of these chapters deals with a particular state and the industries located in it. The analysis focuses on bamboofelling practices, rising of eucalyptus and other raw material, treatment of effluents and pollution of soil and rivers, and their consequent effect on the dependent population surrounding the industries. Each chapter has a conclusion raising pertinent questions, proposing hypotheses for future research, and suggesting ways of improving the prevailing situation.

While arguing that the eco-friendly local species of bamboo, part of the biodiversity of the ecosystem of the Indian forests and grown in homesteads, are good cellulosic raw material which can support the pulp and paper industries, the author also contends that the pulp and paper industries are primarily responsible for the death of bamboo in the catchment areas due to their bad felling practices. This argument is supported by the observation of bamboo being rejuvenated following the ban on felling by the industry in Karnataka and management of bamboo forests by the people in the Northeast that has left the bamboo forest in good health. The author delineates the interconnections among various agencies involved in the destruction of bamboo forests such as government as policy makers, forest departments, forest corporations, Indian and foreign research institutes, and foreign agencies such as Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), World Bank, etc

Besides supporting the pulp and paper industries by supplying pulpwood through the forest departments, state governments have also established industries under the public sector to meet the domestic need of cultural paper and newsprint. More so, as paper became an index of development, and burdened with the responsibility of supplying paper for writing and newsprint, the governments fixed throwaway prices on the wood, and very meagre amount was collected as royalty. Unfortunately,

the royalties have not been spent for the development of forests. In the lobby of the capitalists ever demanding low prices for wood, electricity, and low wages, etc. on various pretexts, governments had to yield to political dictates. The contradictory policies of the government encouraging the private industries on the one hand and giving licenses to import cheap paper on the other have put tremendous pressure on the public sector industries.

The author claims that the compulsion on the Government of India of the suggestions by the FAO and the World Bank to grow the exotic species of a variety of eucalyptus trees by the forest departments and farmers to utilise the forest resources towards improving the balance of payments and help pulp industries have caused immense loss to the forests and particularly the bamboo forests. The unscrupulous contractors and their ignorant labourers never followed the scientific felling of trees, nor have the industries where pulpwood is grown followed the silviculture practices. Moreover, old technology and machinery of the private industries have been resulting in wastage of wood, destruction of forest, and pollution of soil and rivers creating hardships and health hazards to the people

These volumes provide comprehensive accounts of the pulp and paper industries and argue in favour of bamboo as pulpwood However, the assumption that there was no contradiction between the natural and the social history of the local people and the contradictions arose only with the entry of outsiders may have to be taken with a grain of salt, as it leads to the controversies of natural resource management. Studies in the Northeast do indicate that disappearance of forests took place even when the forests remained in the hands of indigenous people. Since the same kind of data has been provided for each state and industrial unit, the analysis is cumbersome and one gets lost in the large mass of data Clearer focus on the connections among the forest, the forest dwellers or native or dependent population and the paper industry would have yielded a comprehensive understanding of the impact of changes in the forest system on the people Ignoring these limitations, these volumes will be immensely valuable to anthropologists, sociologists, ecologists, foresters and paper industrialists, besides the government agencies

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Manoranjan Mohanty (ed.): Class, caste, gender (Readings in Indian government and politics – Volume 5) New Delhi Sage Publications. 2004, 395 pp, Rs 395 (pb) ISBN 0-7619-9644-3

The book under review, conceived as the fifth volume in the series 'Readings in Indian government and politics', is set in the backdrop of the major socio-political and cultural currents of globalisation, authoritarianism and communalism that have been affecting the power dynamics of contemporary India. It contains a set of collected articles from distinguished authors which aim at unfolding the 'dynamic interconnection of class, caste and gender in the Indian political process'. The central concern of the book revolves around the theme of power

The introductory and concluding chapters by the editor situate the theme in the midst of the 'context of power dynamics in India at the end of the twentieth century', and orient the task of the book in a conceptual frame. The introduction is a well-documented and coherently developed essay that highlights the basic thesis of the volume, which is weaved on the categories of class, caste and gender.

The theoretical frame of the book is related to the continued debate prevailing in the sociological circle with regard to the significance of class, caste and gender in political economy. This theoretical problematic is built into the text by posing the question 'whether the three categories have equal significance in the political economy' (p. 25). Although the editor notes the need for recognising the autonomy of caste and gender, he is inclined to emphasise the primacy of class. According to him, 'studying the interface of class, caste and gender we recognise the centrality of class, especially in the context of the modern history of capitalism' (p. 24). Therefore, in establishing the nature of this intercomnection, the book is seemingly founded on the Althusserian conceptual frame, placing the category of 'class or the control over means of production such as land and industry' as 'the most significant source of power' amidst multiplicity of forces (pp. 21, 24-25).

A salient feature of the volume is that the concluding chapter appropriately situates the overall theme in the concept of a 'creative society'. What is more illuminating is the attempt to carve out the concept of a 'creative society' in the context of the social turbulence of the last three decades. The editor views those upheavals as indicative of the making of a creative society wherein hitherto subdued contradictions have come out into the open.

The book is divided into three sections Class structure in India is the theme of the first section. It contains three articles, which discuss the changing class structure in the emerging political economy in India and,

particularly, its implications to the working class. The role of the Indian capitalist class in the recent economic structural reforms has also been discussed in a separate chapter (Ch. 4). In this connection, an essay on the predicament of the unorganised, marginalised, and the scheduled castes (the caste category) and the case of women (the gender category) would have been in order.

The first article of this section, 'Caste and Agrarian Class A View from Bihar' by Anand Chakravarti is a direct and emphatic treatment of the basic thesis of the volume-the class-caste-gender interconnection. It analyses the significance of caste for explaining a person's location in the agrarian class structure By examining the constellation of factors that underlie this connection, Chakravarti argues that agrarian class relations in Bihar are embedded in caste. As against the Dumontian interpretation of the institution of caste as a 'structure of ideas', Chakravarti asserts that both material position and political power are subordinated to status He also argues against the dichotomisation of base/infrastructure and superstructure by the authors writing in the Marxian mould Based on Godelier's position, Chakravarti subscribes to the view that infrastructure and superstructure represent functional spheres that are found in all societies. Hence, it is proposed that, in a relatively undifferentiated social milieu, caste can function as both infrastructure and superstructure Moreover, following Meillasoux, Chakravarti concludes that caste continues to be the fundamental basis of social inequality in contemporary Bihar In this regard, he, in a way, moves away from the theoretical schema set by the editor

Part Two, which is the largest of the three sections, contains six articles dealing with aspects of 'caste domination and political power'. It carries articles on the origin, development and experience of caste in India (Ch. 5), its manifestations and ramifications, and its increased role in modern India and its politics (Ch. 6 and 7), the policy of reservations and its rationale (Ch. 8), the changing forms of 'dalitbahujan' consciousness in post-independence Andhra (Ch. 9), and a discussion on the current debates on the category of dalit (Ch. 10)

Part Three deals with the dimensions of 'gender inequality and social change' It is comprised of articles exploring the process of caste, class and gender stratification shaping the formation of Brahminical patriarchy (Ch 11), an overview of the status of women in India (Ch 12) and the issues related to the efforts at articulating women's problems and questions (Ch 13), and a chapter by Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen looking at the issue of gender inequality in relation to women's agency What the readers will look for in this valuable set of collection is a chapter that

deals specifically on the differently edged problems of the dalit, rural and unorganised women

Although all the articles in the volume are well integrated into its overarching theme, and each of these articles is in itself important and relevant, some chapters have not neen suitably merged into the volume Statements like '[.] this investigation will be pursued a little further in this section and the next one' (Ch 14, p 340) and 'finally a few words about the essays in this book. These contain a variety of style and content' (Ch 13, p 330)', which are meaningful only in the original text, could have been omitted!

The volume unambiguously reveals the fact that the political economy of contemporary India has to be located at the intersection of the all-embracing categories of class, caste and gender This makes it a significant contribution to the political sociology of contemporary India.

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Marie Lecomte-Tilouine and Pascale Dollfus (eds.): Ethnic revival and religious turmoil: Identities and representations in the Himalayas. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, viii + 341 pp., Rs 595 (hb). ISBN 0-19-565592-3.

The volume under review is an attempt to explore and understand the revival of ethnic and religious consciousness leading to widespread social and political upheaval in the Himalayan region in general and the Nepalese society in particular. It is a welcome addition to the literature on ethnicity and identity formation. The essays here engage with the rapid social change and acute religious and identity crises that have emerged in the region. Each essay carries a commentary by an expert on the field concerned. This innovation brings into focus the plurality of approaches that one would prefer in any study on identities and their representations. The volume has also tried to legitimate the claim of the 'self' (as the contributors are Western scholars) to speak for the 'other'. Engagement with the 'other' may often give rise to certain methodological and analytical controversies, but the present volume has successfully demonstrated the utility of the method in exploring a process from critical and plural points of view.

Besides the introductory and concluding remarks, there are eleven essays in the volume, nine of which come from the Nepalese group Michael Hutt discusses a Nepali novel written by a famous Brahman

political leader, to reveal that 'others' construction of the 'self' often finds opposition from the 'other', namely, the Kirants who rejected the image imposed on them. This is mainly because in the novel the 'other' is not taken as different in its own right, but rather it is seen as an inversion of the 'self'. The relation with the 'other' was carried to the other extreme by the Khasa rulers of the middle ages. William B. Douglas shows the way Buddhist Khasa rulers of Western Nepal had worshipped their neighbour's god and created a process of identification and unification between distant societies through religious identification between gods and kings.

After these incursions into literature and history comes social anthropologist David N Gellner's examination of the complexities in the formation of any specific identity among the Newars This discussion is continued further by Johanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, who focuses on changes that take place in the meaning of established symbols and ethnic markers during course of time Such shifting of meaning due to changes in power relationships between groups has important theoretical implications for understanding the process of identity formation

Gil Daryn challenges the notion of 'group' to designate the Nepalese Hill Brahmans called 'Bahuns' Bahuns do not consider themselves to be a 'group', but outsiders label them as such This leads Daryn to define the Bahuns as a category with a 'dormant identity' which, under certain circumstances, may transform itself into a politically active 'ethnic group'

The next two essays do not share the theoretical assumptions about the multi-faced and changing character of ethnic identity. Thus, Ben Campbell and Eberhard Berg suggest that fixed ethnic identity markers like locality or religion are important idioms through which the Tamangs or Sherpas define themselves in their dealings with others. As the commentator notes, social institutions are also constructions and, therefore, one should be careful in mixing an identity with community membership Ethnicity is neither static nor a predetermined object, but a situational construct.

The Nepalese group of papers concludes with a brief write-up by Karl-Heinz Kramer, who summarises the main ethnic arguments and claims from the historical point of view. This essay should have come much earlier or supplemented by a general discussion on the growth of ethnicity in Nepal to make the subsequent readings more interesting. The 'Introduction' needs to be more informative to overcome the limitations that an edited volume generally suffers from

The non-Nepalese group of essays begins with Joanne Moller's study on community and identity in Komaon, North India Two essays dealing

with Ladakh and Gilgit cases follow It is in these essays that one can find the development of a neat theoretical schema on the subject that some of the earlier papers have attempted to spell out It has now been argued that ethnicity becomes salient in social relations particularly when the politics of everyday life accentuate the significance of certain cultural differences Moller particularly stresses the role played by reservation policy in the construction of identity. The insider-outsider debate creating a discourse of deprivation, however, cannot be reduced to a single pattern as our identities are multiple, ambiguous and fluid. The last two essays, by Martin van Beek and Martin Sokefeld, emphasise this aspect of shifting loyalty and fluid nature of ethnicity Hence, as Sokefeld rightly suggests, a new approach is required to study multiplicity of identities as well as their intersectionality. Going beyond the limitations of 'Primordialist' or the 'Instrumentalist' perspective of ethnicity, this new 'Constructionist' approach would delve deep to explore the dissolution of fixed identities and study the plurality or changing pattern of relations between different categories and even within a particular category

The volume ends with a very brief but insightful concluding remark by Steve Brown about the contesting nature of identities in the contemporary world Understanding 'identities' as social constructions or reconstructions suggests a better way to look at the problem. The volume, however, does not provide any review of the existing theories on the subject so as to evolve a comprehensive view on the process of identity formation. Nevertheless, it emerges with a specific and acceptable theoretical reasoning to explain 'ethnic revival and religious turmoil' in the Himalayas. It will, therefore, be of much interest to social scientists across disciplinary boundaries.

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Melissa Butcher: Transnational television, cultural identity and change When STAR came to India New Delhi Sage Publications, 2003, 321 pp Rs 370 (pb) ISBN 0-7619-9767-9

This book, as pointed out on its back cover, 'constitutes not just a history of the development of television in India, nor is it solely an exploration of its impact' This is precisely why this book needs a closer attention by both the electronic media practitioners and media researchers in India The book includes debates and discussions on the issue of cultural

change and the role of television in the process. The nine substantive chapters in this book discuss the issues of 'foreign invasion' of the cultural space in India and 'cultural imperialism' by the Western media through the entry of STAR television in the country. The book contextualises the sociological debate on whether television in the Third World societies has really acted as a tool for economic development and education or 'has [it] become a tool for extending commodification and consumption' (p. 14). Shifting of cultural space and definition of Indianness among different segments, as a result of transnational television as a part of globalisation, is the major focus here

This study is qualitative in nature, though attempts to quantify certain aspects of social change have been made through content analysis and focus group interviews. It focuses on aspects of the relationship between cultural change, television and the construction of identity in India Methodologically, focus group interviews and personal narratives provide the principal information for analysis.

The book examines the basis of Indian identity as a social frame of reference through sharing of means produced from different sites and institutions of powering in the country today Peter Worsley's 'dimensions of culture'-the cognitive, the normative and the action aspects of culture-are presented as promising ideas to analysing the signifying practices of popular culture' Diverse factors such as religion, caste, region, ethnicity, language, gender, occupation, etc., on the one hand, and the basis of the nation-state, on the other, form the foundation for cultural identity. These identities are 'traditional' and 'modern' at the same time, adding to the complexity Hence, the book argues that 'the dynamics of cultural practices are mediated by their placement within a social formation crossed by the hybridity of multiple cultural formulations within a single state' (p 31) Transnational television, which, the author thinks, will be a permanent fixture on the Indian media landscape, has radically impacted both the content and the structure of Indian television

The broad conclusion to which the study arrives may be presented succinctly as follows Transnational television is involved in reinforcing the shifting frames of reference, though its influence varies in differing contexts. Global processes flow into local conditions and, therefore, into the formation or maintenance of identity, and the construction dissemination, consumption or rejection of specific products and ideas Precisely, transnational television is contributing towards the boundary construction of difference For instance, Westernisation at times becomes identical with pollution and contamination as aired by the 'Hindutva' supporters The 'common man' is said to be the most severely affected

by this process of influence However, transnational television is not solely responsible for shifts in cultural practices and cultural identities in India today. The study also argues against the blanket coverage of cultural shifts with universal labelling in terms of modernity-tradition contrast. Hence, words like 'Indian', 'Hindu' or the 'West' cannot be generalised loosely. Images borrowed from transnational television may also serve as expressive symbols of felt self in cases such as the Indian youth.

The book is an important contribution to the area of media studies for many reasons. First, the theoretical position adopted by the author is appropriate to inquiry of this nature wherein differing views on the process of identity construction and imaging (such as those of Robertson, on the one hand, and Nandy and such others, on the other) are considered as probable explanations. Second, methodologically, while accepting a qualitative approach, the study has made use of quantitative information of the focus group interviews to support the qualitative observations and arguments, there are not many research studies on Indian television, which have adopted this assorted approach to theoretical explanation. The language is lucid and the book reads well in terms of its presentation of arguments

There are certain problems, however, that call for general clarifications Methodologically, the sample selected for focus group interviews, notwithstanding the rationalisation of the author, leaves explications desired For instance, in Bangalore, where the first set of focus group interviews were held, the cable television was introduced in the early 1990s but became a major influence only since the last few years. A footnote by the author herself (Fn 29, p 64) supports this observation. The focus group interviews were held in 1996 and the results were published in 2003 The cable television, both in figures and nature, has undergone a sea change since the late 1990s, and I am not too certain if one gets the same kind of responses if the interviews were held now Inclusion of rural participants as a means to 'fill knowledge gap'(p 41) also needs better methodological explanation and the author's claim that 'many of the young people involved in this study, from low and upper income groups, were fluently multilingual' (p 70) may not reflect the general Indian social reality Expressions such as 'the political wing of Hindutya, '(p 63), 'Christmas as a new festival in India' (p 68), without proper elucidation, look unfinished if not unscientific

Although the book calis for enhanced explanations for some of these concerns, it deserves to be read for its valuable insights. This book is recommended for the students and researchers of Indian electronic media

for its conceptual contribution on culture space and identity as well as for its novel way of gathering primary data in the area of media studies

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Mohan Dass Namishray: Caste and race Comparative study of BR. Ambedkar and Martin Luther King Jaipur Rawat Publications, 2003, 216 pp, Rs 425 (hb) ISBN 81-7033-787-9

The book under review compares caste relations in India to race relations in the United States of America and the efforts of BR Ambedkar and Martin Luther King in eradicating caste and race discrimination respectively The book starts with the definition of terms such as social relations, ethnic groups, race and race relations which are neither specific nor exhaustive The author points out that racial prejudice did not exist among primitive people of the world Nor did the early explorers of America have any feeling of instinctive hatred for the natives Speaking of inter-marriage, the author mentions that the Whites avoid intimate relationship with African-Americans as they consider it as pollution, and all mixed blood is classified as 'Negro' After going through a chequered history. America came to realise that its greatest strength lies in its diversity The author agrees with Lamar Alexander that while America as a nation reflects unity in diversity, the emphasis should be on 'unity' and not its 'diversity' Moreover, criticising racial reform, the author states that it is a hollow concept lacking integrity, it comforts the White conscience and makes happy the Black grievance

In the second chapter, the origin of caste and untouchability is examined, these also are compared with race Quoting Ambedkar, the author mentions that untouchability is not only worse than slavery, but is positively cruel The narration of caste system in Indian village is quite interesting the untouchables, devoid of any rights, live a life of exploitation on the fringes of Hindu society and it is due to the inexorable law of *karma* or destiny

Although it is difficult to compare King and Ambedkar, the author brings out a comparative analysis of the similarities in their circumstances, background and academic careers. As children, both King and Ambedkar were discriminated, they felt inferior and their child egos got hurt when they began to learn the truth. Ambedkar studied in the USA and King visited India to study satyagraha, and thus each was influenced by the other's country. King was a Religious Minister and Ambedkar

converted to Buddhism Thus, both were highly religious and they believed that inequality in the form of caste system and racism were the result of religious beliefs

'King and Ambedkar The Struggle for Emancipation' is an important chapter in the book King advocated peaceful, non-violent revolution based on love, faith, conscience and morality He asked the Blacks to take pride in their racial heritage and to develop self-esteem. He vehemently opposed Black separation and advocated their integration into American society Ambedkar also brought about a sense of 'awakening' among the dalits His efforts included abolition of untouchability, labour reforms and emancipation of dalits But, unlike King, he wanted to see the dalits as militant Ambedkar's efforts for socio-political reform and liberty of the downtrodden in society, unlike King's, were placed in the context of a newly emerging modern state, of whose Constitution he became the cheif architect Unlike King, Ambedkar authored many books, not only on dalits but also on political and economic subjects Many of his economic theses are still valid As Jawaharlal Nehru said. Ambedkar would be remembered as a symbol of revolt against all the oppressing features of the Hindu society

The book concludes that, because of the efforts of King and Ambedkar, racial and caste prejudices are being washed away, as is evident from inter-mixing, inter-dining and even inter-marriage. However, the issue of discrimination persists, and not all is as simple as it seems. The book is a significant contribution highlighting the efforts of King and Ambedkar towards eradicating discrimination.

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Nandita Chaudhary: Listening to culture Constructing reality from everyday talk. New Delhi Sage Publications, 2004, 235 pp Rs 320 (pb) ISBN 0-7619-3201-1

This book portrays the relations and experiences encountered by Nandita Chaudhary in her journey within her family and culture. She explores the importance of cultural activities of Indian family and community for the study of individuals and collectivities. She claims that everyday talk with friends and family members occurring in various social domains is precious and rich for a deep understanding of culture.

Chaudhary begins with an attempt to problematise a new approach and understanding of cultural realities, culture and language activity and cultural continuity, not by providing profound spread of work on culture and language, but by limiting them to the families and experiences with people In doing so, she depends heavily on puzzling dualities, ideology and reality, and legitimising personal experiences in the dichotomy of East/West, primitive/civilised, literate/uneducated, and collectivism/individualism. Culture is defined as practical and socially organised activity of human beings. For this reason, Chaudhary identifies the need for developing approaches which embrace all manifestations of cultural and individual variety. To make fair representation of cultural activities or life of people, she argues, it is important to draw upon discursive and unwritten domains of everyday speech. She presents two episodes—a personal encounter (story of the stolen necklace) and a public event (story of lord Ganesh's thirst)—in this regard.

The author explains that cultural terrain and language activity are constructed domains that take place through the art of interaction. Chaudhary presents the views of several renowned scholars on culture as contextual and practical activity, nationality, collective generality and personal uniqueness. As the book advances, she explains the importance of children, family, childhood and socialisation, family and selfhood in understanding cultural continuity. She says that childhood is a structural form, and the child is an important participant in the construction and reconstruction of culture and family and it plays a mediating role in the creation of cultural information.

Chaudhary analyses the central theme of the book in two phases In the first phase, she underlines the prominence of narrating the Indian canvas embedded into tradition, collectivism, culture and historical present and heterogeneity, and, in the second phase, she emphasises childhood and family life, Indian motherhood, language learning and play, and the structuring of environment She claims the Indian landscape to be pluralistic, colourful and contradictory, and despite several confrontations with foreigners it has developed the ability to improvise, adopt, accommodate with new elements without losing its original intensity

In the latter part of the book, Chaudhary discusses several case studies of conversation with adults and children in the family After individual-level illustrations, she turns to explain the collective reality of Indian society by using the phrase 'domains of heightened activity' She elaborates on fluctuating dynamics of self and others, collective individuals and individual like collectives, spiritual belief and mystical space, feast and fast and centrality of food, folklore and modernity and coexisting contradiction, etc in this regard

Finally, Chaudhary tries to discern certain common processes within cultural activity, expressed at both the individual and collective levels

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These common processes act as principles, which are seen to be exploratory in nature novelty, continuity, canalisation, meaning, distance, heterogeneity, density, dramatisation, opposition, and impermanence and uncertainty and subjectivity. In her concluding remarks, she uses the 'pool of ideas', which is viewed as an important way of visualising social activity and individual selection, and within which an individual or group can obtain cultural information

The book provides refreshing and innovative approach to the study of culture by giving importance to everyday talk of people in the family and other collectivities

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Pramod K. Nayar: Virtual worlds Culture and politics in the age of cybertechnology. New Delhi Sage Publications, 2004, 343 pp, Rs 380 (pb) ISBN 81-7829-358-7

As components of social change, technology and culture provide enormous opportunities for a fascinating study of their interface and interaction. In *Virtual worlds* Pramod K. Nayar examines the interface between society and cyber space in its myriad forms. Obviously, such a work requires a sound background in both technology and social sciences. Nayar is sound in his knowledge of social sciences and well versed in the cyber world, though he is modest in saying that his interdisciplinary strength is weak.

The book deals with the cultural and political ramifications of information and communication technologies (ICT) that are invading our society. Although examples are drawn from the West, the processes of change that are likely to bring about a major transformation of our society are well imagined and lucidly presented. The approach is post-modernist. The views of Jean Baudrillard, Daniel Bell, Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Derida are brought in at appropriate places to strengthen the author's arguments. The first two chapters are descriptive and they explain various concepts used in technology, culture, art and aesthetics, and in the study of popular culture. While discussing the concepts and the issues related thereto, Nayar gives the impression that ICT is part of our popular culture. The formidable cost of the instrumentation in IT and the cost of Internet service and the slow pace of introduction of broadband services make ICT the products for the elite and the rich ICT is yet to become popular in the true sense of the term

Nevertheless, Nayar's reflections on popular visual culture, especially on music video, computer games, computer animation, and 3-D sculpting, and his views on dance, choreography and performing arts are noteworthy. His extensive discourse on politics in cyber space is brilliant, and we gain a lot from his analysis of Techno-elitism. The impact of globalization, with its ICT and the speed of cyber space on the larger society, needs special mention. His approach is from the left-of-the-center ideology, though he does not disclose his ideological position—as is common among all Indian academics.

Nayar shows how cyber space restricts people's autonomy, freedom and privacy through technology and its varying and frequently changing software. He amplifies how the nation states are silently transformed into network states, and he explains how modern democracy converts itself into cyber democracy through the power of ICT According to him, there is even a possibility of cyber war using VISTA (Very Intelligent Surveillance and Target Acquisition), DCI (Distributed Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence) and biotechnology. He gives an eloquent example of the Gulf War where the USA used what are called WWMCCS (Worldwide Military Command and Control System), MAPP (The Modern Age Planning Programme), TACCS (The Tactical Army Combat Service Support Computer Systems), ABCCCIII (The Airborne Battlefield Command Control Center), and ODS (The Operation Desert Storm Network). Even cyber terrorism is a possibility, for sure, we are already experiencing the same

Another interesting and useful theme is the influence of ICT on the human body as a biological entity human body becoming a post-human technological body through the use of Visible Human Project, Human Genome Project and through Info-medicine and Nanotechnology. Even eroticism and sexuality in cyber space will make a serious impact on our bodies in an unexpected direction and cyber porn will dominate our sexuality

Virtual world will touch gender issues as well Nayar discusses ICT and gender extensively from science and feminism to technology and feminist issues including reproductive technologies. They are elaborated under ecofeminism, cosmetic surgery and globalisation

The book will excite those who are conversant with the developments in various fields of human endeavour and information technology. For others, it will be too much of information, which they may not be able to appreciate. The strength of the book is its vivid explanation of ICT and its influence on its own different avatars. The chapters are followed up with reading lists and bibliography, including webliography. However, for most of his views, Nayar has relied on a limited number of

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experts, and one gets the feeling that the views expressed are not his own, but of others Even so, sociologists who have an interest in the study of science, technology and culture should read this book, I am sure, they will feel satisfied of reading an excellent academic work

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Premilla D'Cruz Family care in HIV/AIDS Exploring lived experience New Delhi Sage Publication, 2004, 218 pp, Rs 295 (pb) ISBN 0-7619-3233-X

This book on family care in HIV/AIDS provides a lucid account of the lived experiences of the caregivers and care receivers. Considering that the task of accessing the AIDS victims and interviewing them is an extremely difficult one, the researcher's effort is commendable, indeed

The book contains seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the theoretical aspects of the family-care system. The significance of family in providing care to the chronically ill is highlighted. However, this theoretical analysis does not address the issues related to socio-cultural context. The major question that arises is whether family plays the same role globally. Social norms and values play an important role in family matters, and the researcher does not show any sensitivity to this

The second chapter deals with the HIV/AIDS and family care The author quotes Nelkin to emphasise that 'AIDS' is no ordinary epidemic 'More than a devastating disease, it is freighted with profound social and cultural meaning. More than a passing tragedy, it will have long-term, broad-ranging effects on personal relationships, social institutions and cultural configuration' This chapter provides a good account of the large array of caregivers, and shows that different categories of caregivers face different challenges while dealing with HIV patients. This account is based on Western experience. The author does not say anything about India, or Mumbai, where she has conducted her study

Chapters four and five discuss the twelve cases of HIV/AIDS-affected patients, out of whom three are women Though the sample size is small, the author makes an in-depth study of each patient. This chapter sheds light on the experience of patients and their psychological state. The problem of public health care system in dealing with HIV/AIDS pat-

ients is also covered The book will be of interest to policy makers and scholars interested in the socio-medical challenge called HIV/AIDS.

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Purushottam G. Patel: Reading acquisition in India. Models of learning and dyslexia (Research in applied linguistics - Vol. 6) New Delhi Sage Publications, 2004, 172 pp, Rs 395 (hb) ISBN 0-7619-3220-8

This exploratory study on reading acquisition among Gujarati-speaking children in Vadodara is the sixth in Sage Publications' interdisciplinary series on 'Research in Applied Linguistics' The reader will be delighted to find in this book an encapsulated review of reading and its neuro-psychological explanations

According to the author, research on models of reading acquisition has not given adequate attention to the linguistic organisation of the scripts and their cultural contexts. The phonetically near-perfect Brahmi script, in which most of the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages have their roots, is characterised by a sophisticated linguistic design traceable to the ancient Indian science of phonetics. With such a script and an ancient tradition of oral learning, India constitutes a remarkable linguistic terrain for the study of language, script, orthography and literacy.

All cultures, the author asserts, possess a repertoire of verbal rituals and routines. In contemporary India, the Vedic tradition provides the linguistic-cultural ecology stimulating the child's cultural-psycholinguistic development. Prayers, folk songs, wedding songs, lullabies, and children's poetry, following the ancient metrical tradition, are routinely recited and sung in the presence of children in the various geographic-linguistic regions of India. The religious-social-cultural and schooling routines foster sound unit awareness associated with the emergence of literacy in early childhood. The author also sketches the 'cognitive-linguistic-neural processing in reading', so that reading problems in general and dyslexia in particular may be better concept-tualised and interpreted.

With this in the background, the author presents an empirical understanding of reading acquisition among mainstream children with no serious difficulties in learning, and children from the scheduled groups facing non-trivial problems in reading acquisition mechanisms. The issue of a diagnostic or appropriate label for reading problems in such

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children, the author indicates, involves interesting methodological and theoretical consequences

The author speculates that the failure in reading acquisition among children from the scheduled groups may be due to the lack of the beneficial cultural-social-linguistic input available to the children from the mainstream groups. He also introduces the possibility that dyslexic-type neurobiological damage may be caused by extreme poverty, horrendous environmental toxicants, the nutritionally deficient food and socio-cultural-religious shame

Whether the pathogenesis of dyslexia in children is caused by the defective genetic markers on chromosomes 6 and 15 or some environmental toxins and social depreciation, especially in the context of children from the scheduled groups, is, according to the author, an important research question and calls for a multidisciplinary research programme wherein neurobehavioural teratology must be an essential constituent.

This groundbreaking study departs from the current neuropsychological research limited to the middle-class dyslexic child. One must note that despite the hullabaloo of inclusion in today's world, children reared in poverty and its associated environmental conditions are not seriously considered when compensatory special education services are conceptualised, planned and delivered

This book is a welcome contribution to research in psycholinguistics, educational psychology, special education and education. Policy makers concerned about reading acquisition among children of deprived groups too, will benefit from the new approach to dyslexia.

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Thomas E. Weisskopf: Affirmative action in the United States and India A comparative perspective London and New York Routledge, 2004, xviii + 286, £ 65 00 (hb) ISBN 0-415-70002-7

This book makes a comparative analysis of positive discrimination (PD) policy and practice in India and the United States. The analysis is organised in two parts the first part deals with the differing contexts and potential consequences of PD in the US and India, and the second part reports on an empirical assessment of PD in admission to higher educational institutions in the two countries. The comparison is

significant on various counts (1) how the PD issues are handled by developed and developing countries in different ways, (11) how the two major democratic electoral systems deal with the issue of individual right to equal treatment and achieving the goal of removing inequalities and injustice, and (111) how the two multicultural and highly diversified societies address the problem of fulfilling the needs of disadvantaged ethnic minorities. The book has appeared at an opportune time when the debate on PD has gained momentum in both the countries because of some internal factors the US Supreme Court's decision in favour of affirmative action in the case of University of Michigan controversy, and the political call for supporting reservation of jobs for the scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST) and other disadvantaged groups in the private sector in India

'Positive discrimination' means preferential selection of a member of an under-represented group to positions in the larger society. It is a policy tool for providing greater social, political and economic opportunities to the under-represented social groups. The policy is referred as 'affirmative action' in the US and 'reservation policy' in India. The author considers PD to under-represented ethnic groups as a preferable option in comparison with other types of social policies, despite recognising the fact that the policy is not properly designed to help the poor. He admits that the main objective of PD policy is promoting integration of ethnic elites for efficient and harmonious functioning of the society, and not tackling poverty. According to him, poverty can be tackled better through developmental measures involving large-scale redistributive transfer of income and wealth rather than through PD. PD, in that respect, is an easy option and does not affect the status quo of social inequality to a great extent.

'Who should be the beneficiaries of positive discrimination?' The author's answer is ethnicity or caste, rather than class, as the involuntary characteristics of the former provide a more suitable framework for improving the delivery mechanisms of the welfare state, than the latter The main reason advanced is that the labelling effect of ethnicity is deeper than the usual estimation of economic status of an individual or a group, as it becomes the axis through which most of the disadvantages are passed on and legitimised. The ethnic labelling makes the groups disadvantaged more vulnerable to stigmatisation mistreatment The identification of PD beneficiaries would be easier in terms of ethnic labels which are publicly recognised and legally established under constitution, rather than adopting criteria such as income and wealth which are subject to interpretation and analysis

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The identification of eligible PD beneficiaries on the basis of ethnicity has been a controversial issue. The policy of positive discrimination was adopted and implemented by keeping in mind the compelling cases of the SCs and STs, as they were at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy, and were the weakest to pursue welfare and development on their own However, the process did not end there, as new groups have been added under political pressure. The inclusion of 'Hispanic Americans' in the US and the 'Other Backward Castes' in India has shown that PD is meant not exclusively for the weakest group. The current debate of extending reservation facility to the backward among. Muslims highlights the arbitrary nature of identifying beneficiaries under this policy.

One cannot deny that the PD policy has achieved success, though partially, in providing greater opportunities in terms of education and employment to the under-represented groups in both the countries. The author points out that the policy has yielded more benefits in the American context than in the Indian context due to several factors (i) the policy implementation in India has been rigid, (ii) the nature and scale of PD inputs in India is much larger and complex than in the US, and (iii) unlike the American system, the Indian PD system is geared more towards employment than education. In India, a large number of reserved seats in higher positions remain vacant. The uniform quota system for specific category has led to the concentration of beneficiaries in particular sub-groups

The author has taken a pragmatic approach in examining efficiency of the delivery mechanisms of welfare incentives under PD in terms of consequences PD provides individualistic solution to the group-specific problem. It does not go into the systemic issues associated with the causes of prevailing socioeconomic inequalities. He agrees that affirmative action is a political tool in the hands of the welfare state for dealing with the immediate needs of the disadvantaged minorities.

This comparative analysis is useful in reviewing policies and programmes based on PD Unlike various other studies, the book has emphasised both the causes and consequences of PD. The author deploys the cost-benefit model in analysing the positive and negative consequences of PD, and suggests that such a detailed analysis of two different contexts would provide a general model in making optimum use of the PD policy in a particular given context. The American context provides examples of dealing with the problem of affirmative action in the private sector. Although the author has not dealt with the issue of affirmative action in employment in detail, his study provides enough leads which could be used for conducting further study in this area.

keeping in mind the current debate in India about extending the reservation policy for jobs in the private sector

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Corrigendum:

In the article 'Development and Social Mobility among the Lahulis of Himachal Pradesh' by Ajai Kumar, published in SB 53 (2) - May-August 2004, on page 229, lines 8-9 and page 230, lines 3-4 'the place of destination' must be read as 'the place of origin'

In the article 'The Cartoon of a Bengali Lady Clerk A Repertoire of Sociological Data' by Dalia Chakrabarti, published in SB 53 (2) – May-August 2004, the source of note 2 is Bharati Ray 1990 49 and not Prasanta Ray 1990 49

The errors are regretted

Managing Editor

Books Received

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- Aikara, Jacob 2004 Education Sociological perspective Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications
- Babb, Lawrence A 2004 Alchemies of violence Myths of identity and the life of trade in western India New Delhi Sage Publications
- Barker, Chris 2004 The SAGE dictionary of cultural studies London Sage Publications
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- Edles, Laura Desfor and Scott Appelrouth 2005 Sociological theory in the classical era Text and readings Thousand Oaks Pine Forge Press (An Imprint of Sage Publications)
- Gandhi, J S 2004 Law, state and society Indian context Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications
- Gupta, Dipankar (ed) 2004 Caste in question Identity or hierarchy? New Delhi Sage Publications
- Harshé, Rajen (ed) Interpreting globalisation Perspectives in international relations

 Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications
- Karna, M N 2004 Agrarian structures and land reforms in Assam New Delhi Regency Publications by special arrangement with North-Eastern Hill University Publications, Shillong
- Khan, Adeel 2005 Politics of identity Ethnic nationalism and the state in Pakistan New Delhi Sage Publications
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- Premi, Mahendra K 2003 Social demography A systematic exposition New Delhi Jawahar Publishers and Distributors

- Puri, Harish K (ed.) 2004 Dalits In regional context Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications
- Sinha, Jai B P 2004 Multinationals in India Managing the interface of cultures New Delhi Sage Publications
- Tazi, Nadia (Series ed) 2004 Keywords For a different kind of globalization (Set of four volumes Identity, Experience, Gender, and Truth) New Delhi, Vistaar Publications
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For a National Social Science Policy

Partha Nath Mukherji

Honourable Vice-Chancellor Professor Arun Kumar, Professor Yogendra Singh, Professor Sheo Bahal Singh, Professor Jacob John Kattakayam, Professor Gopal Yadav, esteemed colleagues, students and friends

I am extremely happy that our conference is taking place at Gorakh-pur relating our society to a far-flung region of our country and its problems. You will be happy to learn that we have decided unanimously to hold our next annual conference at Jammu, another region that has long been under social and political turmoil. In these decisions lies our identity of being a truly *Indian* Sociological Society, relating with any part of our country and its concerns

I have been trailing Professor Yogendra Singh in the past one month, first at Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi, and now at Gorakhpur Each time he precedes me in his address and makes it difficult for me to do my bit, for he anticipates much of the ground that I wish to cover! He has provided a realistic, comprehensive and very perceptive perspective to the theme of the conference from which, I hope, the deliberations in the symposia will greatly benefit Let me now share with you my own views and thoughts on this very important issue

Perspective

Soon after its declaration of the Science and Technology Policy of January 2003, the Government of India was anxious to come out with a national social science policy (NSSP) within months. The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) initiated several rounds of discussion, bringing in selected scholars from selected institutions to suggest how to provide concrete shape to such a policy. It was a top-down exercise, the wider academia was not privy to what was going on

The Indian Association of Social Science Institutions (IASSI), on its own initiative, had undertaken to elicit the views of the larger academic community on the theme by organising discussions in various parts of the country-Thiruvananthapuram, Kolkata, Allahabad, Chandigarh, Pilani, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Madurai, Lucknow and Mumbai I had the opportunity to attend the discussion held at the Indian Institute of

Technology (Delhi) As far as I can recall, our discussions produced more anxieties than any clear-cut consensus about leaping into a NSSP at short notice without putting in adequate work and thought on the proposal To the best of my knowledge, and I am prepared to stand corrected, the IASSI did not come out with any systematic analysis of contrary viewpoints presented in all the discussion meetings organised by them

Considering that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government's inept handling of the issue of textbooks produced by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) resulted in a national furore, its anxiety to push through a NSSP in unseemly haste was viewed with considerable apprehension—perhaps wrongly—even with suspicion The long and short of this entire exercise was that the NSSP, for good or for worse, did not fructify

Now that we are well past the din of debates held in an environment of suspicion and anxiety, we are well placed to deliberate upon this very issue as a professional body, calmly and coolly, without any apprehension of political interference or intervention. The present United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government is at best, at the moment, indifferent to any such proposal. Our conference theme is the first effort by a professional academic body to discuss the issue, without fear or favour, frankly, freely, objectively and without prejudice

Argument for NSSP

I shall argue for a NSSP, which should be arrived at through a participatory process, involving as many scholars, at as many levels, as possible The participatory process should throw up what ails the healthy growth and development of the social sciences I believe that not only social scientists, but students, the country and beyond, have a stake in the proper nurturing of the social sciences by the state in India I take this opportunity to call upon our sister professional bodies to undertake similar exercises, so that we can pressurise the government in a true democratic mode for an efficient and imaginative NSSP I shall advance three arguments

My first argument rests on the historical fact that both the physical and the social sciences—in the form they are institutionalised—had their origin in the problems and prospects that accompanied the Industrial Revolution, and the concurrent evolution of the modern western nation-state. The sixteenth and the seventeenth century renaissance witnessed the decline of the clerical (divine) authority of the church and its replacement by the new spirit of rationalism brought about by a whole array of thinkers and scientists—Giordano Bruno, Galileo Galilee, Desiderius

Erasmus, Michel de Montaigne, Robert Boyle, Johann Kepler, Nicolaus Copernicus, Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton The institutionalisation of science took place with Isaac Newton and the experimental method as the exemplar of science. It was believed that universal laws could be derived from observation of regularities and patterns in empirical data Certitude was the basis of knowledge as opposed to the dogma of clerics (Mukherji 2000–16). The French Revolution (1789) registered as a cultural upheaval that compelled France, Great Britain and other western countries to recognise that the

pressure for political and social transformation had gained an urgency and a legitimacy that could not easily be contained any longer simply by proclaiming theories about a supposedly natural order of social life. There was not only space for, but a deep social need for, what we have come to call social science (Wallerstein *et al.* 1997–8)

The intellectual anarchy in France following the French Revolution made Auguste Comte visualise the discipline of sociology (or 'Social Physics') as the one that could reconstruct social order on a stable basis, as a more 'exact' or 'positive' science The term 'positive science' was Comte's own coinage, which proclaimed in his *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830) 'our researches, then in every branch of knowledge, if they are to be positive, must be confined to the study of real facts without seeking to know their first causes or final purpose' (cited in *Ibid* 12) It was intended to be free from all other modes of explanation like theology or metaphysics.

In a sense, sociology and its antecedent history of mainly programmes in social reform demonstrate that it grew with the project of the western modern nation-state in an era of industrialisation and capitalist development. Without going into further details, it is obvious that, for the social sciences, the focus historically has been primarily on the modern nation-state, its development and progress within some kind of a world or international system. It is logical, and understandable, that the post-colonial nation-states that have inherited the western institutionalisation of science and the social sciences, recognised this. This process has not witnessed a reversal

What is of very crucial significance, however, is to realise that the non-western countries needed to wean themselves from the accretions of parochial and ethnocentric biases of social science knowledge embedded in western paradigms. This, by no means an easy proposition, could only happen by setting in motion the *de-parochialisation* of knowledge in the social sciences received from the West and the *non-parochial indigenisation* of such knowledge in the non-western societies (Mukherji 2004)

32-34) It is, therefore, extremely important that developing countries consciously pursue social sciences to respond to their societal problems with the help of categories, concepts, theories and theoretical propositions that are able to comprehend substantive problems faced by them precisely and realistically. Left to the market and the externally funded civil society organisations, research agendas may take a course that may not necessarily reflect the kinds of basic and applied research that are critical to the health of the society. For this to happen in a developing country, like India, with its baffling heterogeneity and its complex problems of inequity, there is urgent need (a) for state support of the kind of research that cannot but be prioritised, and (b) for an institutional framework within which such research is realisable. The establish-ment and the evolution of ICSSR and its twenty-seven state-level research institutions were in response to this felt imperative.

This cannot, however, limit *per se* the total scope of sociology or the social sciences and make it nation-state bound, particularly, in a globalising world. By the very logic of globalisation, the social sciences are bound to tie up the local and the national with the global. At the same time, arguments by hyper-globalists, proclaiming that the institutions of the nation-state are becoming increasingly redundant, are misplaced and misconceived. All the more reason, in an era of boundless confusion, the importance of the role of a democratic state like India in defining research agendas is of crucial importance.

My second argument for a NSSP, often glossed over, is the paramount importance of concepts and theories in the social sciences for the development of a country and the region. It should be obvious with some serious reflection that while social science paradigms are abstracted from the real world, they are also instrumental in transforming the world, with intended and unintended consequences. To cite a few conspicuous examples, Keynesian economics that owed its origin in the economic crisis following the two World Wars, particularly the second, influenced the monetary and the fiscal policies of countries for nearly half a century It led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund as a mechanism for pre-empting the disaster of another Great Depression and ultimately to the evolution of the welfare state. Around the same period, Talcott Parsons perfected the model of modernisation (the pattern variables) that caught the imagination of the world until such times that the non-western countries realised and exposed its ethnocentric bias More recently, Milton Friedman, the Nobel Laureate in economics, advocated the neo-liberal economic regime that influenced the formulation of the policy of structural adjustment-so unthinkingly applied all over the developing world as a one-size-fits-all formula resulting in disastrous

consequences for many sub-Saharan African and other countries (Stiglitz 2002 34) Political science has been able to overwhelm the developing world with its western model of representative democracy, which was imposed and constructed over its colonies, with total disregard to the native, indigenous structures of participatory democracy Even today, we witness the aggressive attempts to introduce democracy in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan cast in the western mould, as if that was the only form of democracy

So pervasive and overwhelming has been the sway of western social science.² which is transmitted as received wisdom to the rest of the world - to be severely critiqued only when found wanting - that it has raised one of the epistemologically most relevant questions in the social sciences 'The social sciences that originated in the West, are indigenous to the West, are they necessarily universal for the rest?' (Mukherji 2004) 16) Syed Hussein Alatas, the distinguished Malaysian sociologist attempted to capture this phenomenon with his now well-known concept of the 'captive mind', which referred to an 'uncritical imitation' that pervaded 'almost the whole of scientific intellectual activity', including 'problem-setting, analysis, abstraction, generalisation, conceptualisation, description, explanation and interpretation' (1972 11-12) Two and a half decades later, Wallerstein, reacting to the same situation, asserts 'if social science is to make any progress in the twenty-first century, it must overcome the Eurocentric heritage which has distorted its analyses and its capacity to deal with the problems of the contemporary world' (Wallerstein 1997 22).

There is, therefore, an imperative need of the role of the democratic state to foster and nurture the indigenous sources of development in the social sciences, which are under the overwhelming hegemonic influence of western intellectual traditions, in order to be able to comprehend native reality with greater efficiency and enabling development to take shape commensurate with its culture and tradition. Such a strategy and programme of social research will bring out the universals embedded in the indigenous traditions of the developing world, with their own configuration of interests. Otherwise, there is the continuous possibility of our society getting fashioned in the image of the West, and in the larger interest of the West.

My third argument follows from the two above If we do not create conditions for the growth of innovative, creative social science, we will be constantly vulnerable to the constructions from the dominant western centres of social science Furthermore, vacuum in such social science knowledge will inevitably lead to its appropriation by western social science and/or by aspiring politicians, whose role in the competitive

game of elitist politics in representative democracy—not totally free from unscrupulous practices—will make the situation more complex for the large masses of the people. There is clearly urgent need for invigorating the social sciences in an environment of freedom of thought and expression, so that differing orientations with different perspectives concentrate on the same substantive problems. The function and role of a NSSP will be precisely to create, constantly reinforce and protect that environment

There is a caveat to the three arguments, lest I am misunderstood

just as concepts and theories emanating from the West can and may have relevance beyond the West, likewise, concepts and theories originating from contexts other than the West can and may have relevance for the West It is only when knowledge generation from different societal and cultural contexts contributes to the pool of social science knowledge, that social science will be moving genuinely towards its proper universalisation (Mukherji 2004 33)

Furthermore, some western scholars have contributed perceptively to Indian reality and there is no reason that this will not (or should not) continue

Consequent to the 'September 11' episode, the world is becoming messier and messier. The perennial Palestinian problem seems to elude any solution, the invasion of Afghanistan and later Iraq, the simmering uncertainties of the Iranian and North Korean situations, and the abominable situation in many parts of Africa, suggest that discontent and discord are engulfing ever-larger proportions of humanity. It is at such a juncture, when the West seems to be stumbling from one crisis to another aided by its dominant paradigms in the social sciences (in particular, international relations), that the scope for voices from countries like India are now being sought to be heard. Let us hear what Professor Mary King, a close associate of former President Jimmy Carter, a Democrat lady in distress, has to say post-Bush re-election.

I would (also) say that it is terribly important to bring India's own realism to the table. We need in the U.S. and the world community the voice of India. We need a strong voice from the southern hemisphere. India can bring a voice of realism to the international community that is desperately needed. I think that India will also have to recognise that peace is inseparable from justice. This is one of the powerful insights coming out of the Indian independence struggle. During the 1920s and 30s Black leaders were travelling from US-African-American college presidents—, newspaper editors—to sit either with Gandhi or go and visit various sites of the independence struggles. This was explicit transformation in the transmittal of knowledge of Indian independence struggle into the African-

American community in U S, so that by the twentieth century there were beginnings of the formation of civil rights movement (King 2004)

'Nationalisation' of the Social Sciences: Tracing Evolution

Let us trace the evolution of how national significance was bestowed on the social sciences in India In 1958, the government came out with its first Scientific Policy Resolution. The argument was simple and straightforward: the wealth and prosperity of a nation depended upon 'the effective utilisation of its human and material resources through industrialisation'. Industrialisation was contingent on the vigorous and intense cultivation of science. The cost of importing science and technology was fabulously expensive. The early and large-scale development of science and technology would reduce this import cost and release the forces of planned rapid development. The era of import substitution industrialisation would hold its sway for the next four decades. National attention on the social sciences had yet to register.

It was on the recommendation of the Social Science Research Committee that the ICSSR came into existence in 1969 3 Support for academic research in the social sciences was now institutionalised by the state By 1973, JP Naik, the pioneering spirit behind the institutionalisation of social science research, was already arguing for a national policy in the social sciences that should be drafted by the ICSSR Such a policy 'would spell out the significance and relevance of different types and areas of research, for theory-building and methodological innovations in the disciplines and for solving social problems' (Chatterjee et al. 2002 40) He was of the view that ICSSR as a government-sponsored national organisation was obligated to take decision's on priority areas of research. To ensure that this did not interfere with the autonomy of the Council, he insisted that all decisions in this regard would rest largely in the hands of social scientists. His model included equal valence for basic and applied research, respect for different ideological orientations in research, and some funds earmarked for innovative research in nonpriority areas (Ibid 40-41) Naik seemed to hold the view that the national policy in social science would be concerned mainly with researches to be undertaken by the apex body, the ICSSR It is, therefore, not the case that the NDA government was the first to raise the issue of a national policy in social science. What is true is that the NDA government was proposing for a much more wide-ranging policy including teaching and research.

Social Science Research Council (USA) Report

Surprising though it might appear, government till date has not carried out any rigorous and comprehensive review of the state of social science in the country. Yet it sought to put the cart before the horse by working out a national policy in social science. Paradoxically, it was the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) of the United States of America that commissioned an appraisal of social science research capacity in South Asia, and on that basis produced some recommendations (see *Ibid* 140)

Considering that the Report undertook the daunting task of covering such a large terrain, it is not surprising that questions arise on its methodology, analysis and interpretations, particularly with respect to India. Nonetheless, professional propriety demands that the document being pioneering in nature, the policy framework inherent in its recommend-dations be given due respect and discussed.

According to the Report, the key issue in the restructuring of the social sciences lies in 'the relation between universities and institutes [which] was meant to be complementary, but has not always been so The tendency has been, in general, to assign teaching functions to the universities and concentrate the research activities in the institutes' (*Ibid* 140-41) It goes on to suggest that 'if a large number of universities cannot be institutionally organised or adequately funded for the purpose of carrying out research, the institutes even a smaller number, must be funded for this purpose' (*Ibid* 142)

The recommendations largely follow from this initial premise of differentiation of functions between the university (teaching) and the institute (research) The ten most important recommendations are as follows

- Short-term fellowships for university and college teachers should be provided 'to do research at the major research institutes' (*Ibid* 143)
- Visiting appointments should be made available, which would 'allow scholars in research institutes to teach advanced and specialised subjects in post graduate university departments—disseminating their research among teachers and students in the universities', while making 'it possible for university teachers engaged in research to interact with the research community in the institutes' (*Ibid* 143-44)
- Involve 'research institutes in designing more innovative refresher courses in new areas of scholarship' to replace the 'unattractive and unenlightening' ones, apparently being organised by universities (*Ibid* 144)
- Devise ways and means by which 'scholars in the diaspora might be utilised in research and training activities in South Asian universities and institutes' (*Ibid* 145)

- University departments and research institutes should jointly organise 'training workshops with PhD students and other young researchers in the social sciences', and explore the possibilities of adding more research institutes of the kind which 'run specialised teaching programmes that lead to postgraduate degrees such as the MA or MPhil' (Ibid 146)
- vi Create an intellectual environment for macro level empirical research particularly in sociology, political science and anthropology (*Ibid* 147-48)
- vii Induce and put pressure on project donors, particularly of the North to involve their client research institutions in project formulation and insist on the publication of data, methodology, and findings for the consumption of 'the larger community of scholars in the field' (*Ibid* 148)
- viii Provide infrastructural support in the form of Regional Social Science Libraries to be located in 'university departments where advanced research is carried out or at research institutes, so that the faculty can actively advise on, and if necessary, supervise, the process of acquisition' and activate inter-library loan of books and periodicals (*Ibid* 150-51)
- Facilitate communication of social science in specific language groups by putting 'together handbooks of social science terms that might become acceptable as standard' (*Ibid* 153)
- x Encourage 'practicing figures in social science [to] write and publish in their local languages', since 'translations are frequently inadequate in generating a vibrant social science discourse in South Asian languages' (*Ibid*)

The Report brings out some important points for consideration for a NSSP However, the conclusion that universities, by and large, are sites for dissemination of knowledge, while institutes constitute the base for scholarly research, do not follow from any empirical analysis of a welldesigned research methodology on the state of social science in India The generalisability of such a proposition is premature and flawed ⁶ The proposed model of complementarity between the university and the institute is frankly unjust. The research institute, in this model, is clearly superior to the teaching university Teachers are expected to refresh their knowledge and park their major research projects in the institutes While conducting training programmes for PhD students they should undertake it jointly with institutes. Researchers from institutes should be allowed to teach nothing less than advanced and specialised courses to postgraduate students in the universities where they can disseminate their research findings Even refresher courses meant for teachers should be left to institutes to design innovatively and imaginatively

Personally, in my thirty-two years of professional experience as teacher in the universities and as full-time researcher—spending exactly half the time in each—I am more than convinced of the need for a symmetrical relationship of complementarity between teaching and research, and between the university and the institute, in the interest of social sciences and the country. One institution must not be privileged over the other A NSSP will do well to work out the modalities of such a complementarity model of teaching and research.

NSSP: Institutional Aspects

I have argued for a NSSP for the promotion of social science in the country. For, without one in place, the systemic constraints overwhelming its proper growth cannot be overcome. Furthermore, if there is no social science policy in place, something will be in place, which can always turn problematic. Perhaps this is what Naik had apprehended when he proposed for a policy. One can make a case that the decline that the ICSSR has been facing is precisely on account of this. Two basic premises underlie my arguments (a) that the resultant direction of social science is its perennial pursuit for a just society, and (b) the nurturing of social science in an environment of freedom is ultimately the best guarantee of that freedom and its expansion. I shall now discuss some of the major institutional aspects that could go into the consideration of the NSSP.

I have already stated that any NSSP should be an outcome of a participatory democratic process of eliciting the problems that afflict the proper growth of social sciences. It should ultimately form a part and parcel of what needs to be done to our system of higher education in order to produce excellence in both sciences and the humanities. At the participatory level, the professional associations representing the various social science disciplines should activate the process by which they can assess what ails them and what needs to be done. As far as we sociologists are concerned, we have just begun the process.

At the level of our apex institutions (UGC, AICTE, ICSSR, ICHR, ICPR, ICHR and the like), the issues need to be raised by those who have already deliberated upon this at the participatory level in their respective professional associations. At some stage the professional associations can come together to share the commonalities in their views and their differences, to contribute to the process.

I shall now bring to your kind attention some of the major areas of concern and the aspects of problems affecting the growth and the development of our discipline with which you must already be seized. In the

Gandhian spirit of antyodaya, I will keep in mind the problems of the teachers at the mofussil level upwards. Needless to say, it is not my intention to engage in working out a complete blueprint of a NSSP I shall confine myself only to an effort to envision a broad egalitarian institutional framework that, to my mind, carries the potential of releasing enormous motivational force in the development of relevant social science

The *Mofussil*, the State and the Nation: Horizontal and Vertical Integration of Teaching and Research in Social Science

From the mofussil colleges upwards the academic structure must provide the scope for integrating teaching with research. None of us should underestimate the potential value of research at the mofussil level The primacy of such research would naturally concentrate on the micro realities that more often than not elude the notice or the scope of the urban located 'sophisticated' researcher Such research can best be conducted in the national language of the region with support and facility of dialect-language communication Substantive areas of research at the micro level can include development themes related to the alleviation of rural poverty and on how to bring about rural prosperity, social mobility, local and oral histories, changing aspects of major social institutions, like caste, family and kinship, as they relate to the construction of ethnic identities, class stratification and differentiation, as they relate to class consciousness, the system of power operating within the framework of representative and participatory structures of democracy involving national/regional political parties, various tiers of statutory panchayats and traditional structures of caste and village panchayats, the changing gender relationships, the role of bureaucracy, the state of education, religious, secular and plural domains of social life, criminality and criminal justice, and the myriad other problems that escape us This is what I would like to call the horizontal integration of teaching and research

Such stimulation for research at the *mofussil* level can only take place when there is an outlet for its expression. In an age of electronic communication, it should be possible simultaneously to generate real and virtual regional level, *bilingual journals* in the national and the English languages. We can well imagine the wealth of micro-level research data that can pile up into a massive archive from which *any* serious researcher (from the metropolitan to the *mofussil*) can benefit and better one's sense of reality. Such data can contribute phenomenally to the analysis and understanding of the kind of developmental efforts that can go into the

various regions by the state Furthermore, this could open up the scope for social mobility of aspiring *mofussil*-level teachers and scholars whose intellectual and academic endowments and potential are restricted only because there exist no channels for such mobility

Such potential at the mofussil level could be integrated with the scholarship at the higher and more sophisticated levels of research in the national- and the state-level universities and research institutes Most field-based research projects run by state- and national-level scholars tend to depend too much on available research investigators around them or on casual recruitment of such research staff of indifferent quality and motivation at the field level If such projects enlist the cooperation or collaboration of mofussil-level teachers-researchers, they can provide greater accuracy and authenticity to their researches. This is what I would like to characterise as the vertical integration of teaching and research from the mofussil to the state to the national levels Such vertical integration should encourage national and state level scholars to lecture and interact at the mofussil level with college teachers and students, while involved in research that takes them to the micro level, and also, reciprocally invite the mofussil-level teachers, who have displayed academic talent, to share their research experience at the national-level institutions of teaching and research at appropriate levels of discussions/seminars

It has generally been accepted that a vital aspect of vertical integration is the *translation* of standard texts and other serious social science literature *from* the English to the regional languages for upgrading the standard of social science proficiency of regional and *mofussil* teachers and researchers. However, I cannot recollect any proposal mentioning the imperative need of *translating research outputs of value* in *the national languages* into *English* for the education and enlightenment of the English-knowing urban and metropolitan academic literati. The two-way flow of translations is essential to the vitality of social science in a culturally plural, supremely complex, many-layered India. From my very limited understanding of ground realities in Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal and the Hindi-speaking belt, I can foresee that a bold and creative national initiative can enkindle excitement in social science, releasing incalculable transformative potential

Resources

The existence of more than 200 universities, with some 2,500 social scientists, manning about 423 postgraduate departments, on the one hand, and another 600 to 700 in research institutes (including the twenty-

seven jointly under the ICSSR and the various state governments), on the other, constitute a vital human resource asset that can presumably be turned to much greater advantage (Chatteriee et al 2002 52) Our colleagues working in the economics of education could be motivated to examine to what extent the redeployment of existing resources can meet with requirements of a complementarity model of horizontal and vertical integration of teaching and research in the social sciences. The government can consider corporate participation in the educational sector, particularly in the infrastructure sector such as communication systems, print technology and libraries, as well as, support for research The professional social science associations can be strengthened, provided stability and encouraged to take up an active role in promoting the growth and excellence of their disciplines building on indigenous sources of knowledge, engaging with received wisdom from the West and sharing and exchanging experiences with other developing societies Furthermore, these associations can jointly organise or encourage multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary substantive problem areas of research and teaching

In Pursuit of Excellence

I began by drawing attention to the western hegemony over dominant social science paradigms that overwhelm our teaching and conceptual-methodological frameworks of empirical research. We have been far too outward looking for frameworks through which to understand our realities. There is need for critically engaging with western paradigms, not just to point out shortcomings, there is greater need to develop theoretical-conceptual-methodological frameworks to demonstrate their greater relevance and relative superiority. There is no short cut to this without serious, rigorous and relevant research.

At a time when the western paradigm in social sciences is failing to arrest escalating regression into conflicts, wars, social Darwinist propensities of justifications of national security of the fittest, legitimating hedonistic norms of consumerism, unleashing trafficking in drugs, guns, flesh, children, animals and what not, it is time we drew from the inner recesses of our civilisational vitality to work out our indigenised model of development in an irreversible globalised world. Western influence since the period of Enlightenment has institutionalised social accreditation of knowledge authenticated by science and rational-logical explanation and interpretation of reality. Today one has to acknowledge that science is *only one*, even if the major, source of knowledge. Philosophy and religion, language and literary expression of

reality, folk wisdom accumulated through the ages, and other expressions of social reality are all important sources of knowledge in their own right and must feed into the social sciences for their enrichment and greater relevance

I wish to conclude with an appeal for two concrete proposals to the national government and our corporate leaders. Give this country, nay, give South Asia just one multiplex library/resource centre in social sciences and humanities equivalent to that of a Harvard/Columbia/ Princeton/Yale , where, from the ordinary teacher in a mofussil college, to aspiring young scholars, to the most endowed professor-any academic-can spend research time at a stretch with affordable accommodation to bury herself in the research she wishes to pursue The one factor that puts us at a serious handicap with the run-of-the-mill scholar in the West-is this deprivation, which can only be met by going to Harvard/Columbia/Princeton/Yale Not only does the scholar in the West have a head start in an unequal race, when she comes to our country to do research, she is more privileged than her native counterparts She has access to data that her counterpart cannot expect-a legacy we suffer from of a still-colonially captive mind. Let the resource centre open up the portals of knowledge and information equally to the mofussil and the metropolitan scholar from anywhere in South Asia (or the rest of the world), I can vouch that it will transform our South Asian region

The second proposal is, until such times that this can happen, let the Parliament Library, at least, be accessible to Parliamentarians and scholars alike. This will also be a novel gesture on the part of our elected representatives to show respect to one of the basic institutions of society—education If the Library of Congress in Washington can be accessible to scholars all over the world, why should the Indian Parliament lag behind?

Notes

Presidential Address delivered at the XXX All India Sociological Conference, D D U Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur, 27-29 December 2004

- 1 According to Held (1999 3-5), the *hyper-globalists* (including W Wriston, K Ohmae, S Gill, S Strange, R Cox, and J Gray) believe that the transnational networks of production, trade and finance are giving rise to new forms of social and economic organisations that are already supplanting, and in course of time, will supplant the traditional nation-states. The roles of the nation-states would be reduced to that of managing the consequences of globalisation.
- 2 Strictly speaking, there is nothing like western, eastern, or southern social science. The usage is made in the sense of social science that originated and developed historically in the West.

- 3 The Chairman of this Committee was V K R V Rao, the other members were D R Gadgil, A Aiyappan, Ramkrishna Mukherjee and M S Gore The first members of the newly formed Council were D S Kothari, P N Dhar, C R Rao, N K Bose M L Dantwala, Rajni Kothari, M N Srinivas, Sukhamoy Chakravarty, Ravi Mathai, among others, J P Naik was its first Member Secretary (Chatterjee et al 2002 40)
- 4 Evaluations of the social science have been confined to sporadic reviews of individual disciplines by the ICSSR
- 5 The assessment of the social science research capacity in India, at one level is based on the performance of the Centre for Development Economics (CDE) and the Department of Sociology, both of the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, representing north India, and the Madras Institute of Studies (MIDS), Chennai. and the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore, representing South India At the second level, 'a quick survey' was done of five leading social science journals Contributions to Indian sociology, the Sociological bulletin the Indian economic and social history review, Studies in history and the Economic ana political weekly (a non-refereed publication) At the third level, the contributions of the North-Eastern Hill University in Shillong, the Presidency College and the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, in Kolkata, have been described. At the fourth level the experiences of the MIDS and ISEC in the South, and the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi in the North have been discussed The first level focuses on the hypothesis of 'Decline and Crisis' in institutions, the second level or the 'Institutions of Research', the third level is on 'Social Science and Society' and the fourth level deals with 'Public and Private Sponsors' There is a section devotec to the ICSSR The Report does not explicate a clear methodology, thereby raising questions of comparability and representativeness, and, therefore, of generalisation
- 6 The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) has been placed in the category of research institutes. This is a fallacy. The NMML is a research institution but not a research institute. It is unique in the sense that academic faculty from the universities can buy sabbatical time to invest in independent research without being in a research institute. It is neither a university nor an institute, out only a site for parking research time.

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Communism through the Ballot Box: Over a Quarter Century of Uninterrupted Rule in West Bengal

Proshanta Nandi

Even though communists have been on the run in much of the world lately, they have been in power in West Bengal for more than a quarter century now Headed by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), a coalition of left-wing parties has been ruling the state without interruption since 1977 Although the government scored major successes in agriculture and rural development, its pro-labour and anti-industry policies led to flight of industries to other states. Its economy under heavy strain, pressure of population, congestion, pollution and poverty are compounding the problems of the state, especially Kolkata, its capital Despite all this, the communists and their Left-Front partners have been returned to power in every election since 1977 The present paper focuses on this intriguing phenomenon through an assessment of the successes and failures of the government

'Wretchedness shared makes one doubly wretched '
- Leo Tolstoy

Introduction

Despite communism being on the run and most of the governments under communist rule having fallen throughout the world during the recent decades, communism in the state of West Bengal has apparently been thriving for over a quarter of a century now. Having come to power in 1977 in collaboration with a number of other left-wing parties in one of India's most culturally rich and once most industrialised states, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [hereafter referred to as CPI(M)] has had the longest ruling democratically elected communist government in world history. The fourteenth largest state in India in size (88,752 square km) and fourth largest in her population (nearly eighty million people), West Bengal has re-elected the leftist parties, known as the Left Front, led by the CPI(M) for the seventh time since 1977, most recently in the May 2004 parliamentary election (see Mallick 1993, Gopalakrishnan

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1997, The telegraph 2001, Hindustan times 2004) West Bengal, in the opinion of one scholar, is one of the world's last few surviving communist outposts (Essenjit 1998 633) The CPI(M)'s detractors, however, see the political system operating in West Bengal as enforced politicisation of the basic institutions of the society in the crudest of forms. As one commentator puts it, 'Communism is dead as mutton in Russia, it is almost dead in China. It is detested everywhere. But it survives in a part of India called West Bengal in a most ridiculous form' (Kamath 1999)

The CPI(M)'s initial passage to power in 1977 surprised even the Party itself when it won all but sixty-three of the 293 assembly seats in the West Bengal legislature. Although the Party lost some of its initial popularity in the elections in between, it has been returned to power in every election since 1977, and by an overwhelming majority in the most recent parliamentary election held during May 2004. Led by its major partner, the CPI(M), the ruling Left Front swept the 2004 parliamentary elections in West Bengal by bagging thirty-five of the state's forty-two parliamentary seats, with the Congress Party of India winning six seats, and the Nationalist Trinamool Congress—the principal opposition party—winning just one

Like any other political party in India, the CPI(M) has to operate within the framework of the Indian Constitution. This is what the CPI(M) leadership sees as the primary reason why revolutionary changes could not readily be brought about in India (see Mallick 1993. 3)

Movement towards the Left

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) was formed in 1964 following a split in the erstwhile Communist Party of India Right from its inception, the CPI(M) tried to mobilise the masses against what it called the 'bourgeois landlord-led governments' of both Delhi and Kolkata. It organised a series of people's movements against price rise, industrial recession, lack of employment opportunities and food shortages. Around 1966, West Bengal experienced a severe shortage in the supply of food, kerosene and other essential commodities. The CPI(M) called for a seventy-two-hour general strike against the state's then ruling Congress government to which the frustrated people of West Bengal responded enthusiastically.

In 1967, in the fourth general election, the ruling Congress Party failed to get a majority of the assembly seats in West Bengal, and the first non-Congress Ministry was formed in the state. The United Front Government, as it was called, consisted of a number of left-wing parties, the principal among whom was the CPI(M). While Ajoy Mukherjee, the

leader of the Bangla Congress, a breakaway faction of the Congress Party, was elected the Chief Minister, CPI(M)'s Jyoti Basu was elected the Deputy Chief Minister This government, however, did not last its full term, and, in the subsequent mid-term election, the United Front was again voted to power The next few years saw frequent changes in the government, including a stint when no political party formed the goverrment in West Bengal, and the state was governed under President's Rule Towards the end of the 1960s, the state witnessed a violent political movement, called the Naxalite Movement, the purpose of which was to seize land and set up a people's administration so as to bring about a social and political revolution. Although the movement was only marginally supported by the Indian Communists and lasted only a short few years, it created terror and confusion among both the citizenry and administration because of its readiness and ability to kill, maim and destroy whomever it considered to be the enemy of the people Finally, in 1977, the people of West Bengal gave a decisive and massive mandate to the CPI(M)-led Left Front with Jyoti Basu as the Chief Minister Jyoti Basu led the government for nearly twenty-three years as the Chief Minister of West Bengal until his 'retirement' in November 2000 As stated earlier, the Front has been ruling the state without interruption since 1977

The Left Front has been both acclaimed and blamed for various commissions and omissions. It has strong supporters and detractors at all levels in the state. Supporters are vocal, dedicated and active. In general, they claim success for many of the government programmes and see the opposition as standing in the way of progress. Detractors, while admitting some progress in the rural sector during the initial years of the Left-Front administration, see the leadership gradually degenerating into oligarchy and despotism. They blame the Left-Front leadership for ignoring the reign of terror and coercion let loose by some of its cadre and party underlings who would try to manipulate the voting behaviour, compromise the democratic principles and silence those opposed to their policies.

Successes Claimed

As pointed out earlier, the Left Front blames the existing Constitutional framework for its inability to execute its radical socioeconomic programmes. Nevertheless, it claims some success in being able to ensure an all-round development of the state and improve the living conditions of the masses. Since India lives in its villages, it is crucial to realise, the Left Front asserts, that any plan for development and reconstruction must

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begin at the rural scene Cognizant of this, the state government started its programme of action at the village level Some of the areas in which it claims success are summarised below (see Basu *et al* 1997)

Land Reform

Given the limited powers a state government has under India's constitutional framework, the Left-Front government soon realised that it was not possible for it to completely eliminate what it considered to be the feudal and semi-feudal forms that characterised the state's society and polity So, it resolved to adopt measures to provide some relief to the agricultural workers, sharecroppers and small peasants who together constituted over 75 percent of the rural population in the state. According to official sources, the Left Front distributed nearly one million acres of land out of 2.9 million acres vested with the government to nearly 2.35 million landless peasants The West Bengal Land Reforms Act was passed in order to help the landless peasants by (a) guaranteeing a minimum living wage, (b) making provision for work for them during the lean months, and (c) providing them with house-sites The government claims to have been able to provide house-sites so far to 275,000 agricultural labourers and artisans. It has made it difficult for the landlords to evict the sharecroppers on the pretext of personal cultivation

The sharecroppers now have hereditary rights to cultivate the land Since they had no papers to prove that they were the sharecroppers, a 'presumption clause' had been inserted in the Act to the effect that when a person cultivated another person's land he would be presumed to be the sharecropper, and the onus of disproving his sharecropper status would lie with the landlord Furthermore, the sharecropper does not have to be at the mercy of the moneylenders for loans, once he registers himself, he becomes eligible to get loans from the public sector banks at a nominal rate of interest of 4 percent

David Gardner (2001) refers to an officer of the state bureaucracy who saw a change in the psychology among the poor He still saw poverty in West Bengal, but no destitution. It is pertinent to recognise, as Akash Kapur (1998) points out while discussing poverty in Kerala, that one can be poor yet prosperous

The most distinct achievement of the Left-Front government, without doubt, has been in the rural sector. The government, as Gardner (2001) observes, reinforced the redistribution of land by small-scale public works, such as wells and irrigation, and micro-credit schemes, with the result that output soared, making Bengal India's biggest producer of rice, potatoes and vegetables. The policy of 'land to the tiller' led to a specta-

cular rise in agricultural growth rate. As per Statistical handbook - West Bengal 2002 (2003. 65, 99 and 100), production of principal crops rose from 8,281 (in '000 tonnes) in 1980-81 to 16,501 (in '000 tonnes) in 2001-02—a rise of 99 2 percent, that of milk from 2,912 (in '000 tonnes) in 1990-91 to 3,515 (in '000 tonnes) in 2001-02, that of eggs from 2,279 (in millions) in 1990-91 to 2710 (in millions) in 2001-02, and the production of fish and fish seed from 2,300 (in millions) in 1980-81 to 9,000 (in millions) in 2001-02—a positive change of 291 percent

The Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Policy

The next reform on the table was about administrative decentralisation. In 1977, the Panchayati Raj was introduced in order to fight rural vested interests and to tilt the relationship between different classes in favour of the mass of poor people. The Left Front claims that it has extended democracy to the grassroots

At the village level of panchayati raj, a standing committee prepares the list of persons to whom vested lands are redistributed. The Left Front claims that more than 60 percent of the total agricultural land is now owned by small and marginal farmers as compared to the national average of 29 percent Panchayats are also the channels through which the farmers receive other agricultural inputs such as irrigation, manure, implements, fertilisers, credit and marketing facilities and production technology. According to official records of the West Bengal Government, 82 percent of the beneficiaries of the rural development programme are landless labourers, 65 percent of whom belong to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Left-Front government made an early decision to relate the planning process to local rural needs and aspirations. Hence, it introduced a policy that 50 percent of the annual plan expenditure should be decided at the district and the block levels. District Planning Committees and Block Planning Committees have been set up to make allocation decisions.

Positive Changes in the Rural Scenario

As a result of the land reforms and the panchayati raj schemes, the government claims that there have been positive socioeconomic changes in the rural scene. The state registered a significant rise in its agricultural productivity. The crop output in the state grew at the rate of 6.5 percent per year and the growth of food grain production has been the highest in India. According to Economic Survey 2000-2001 (see *India 2003*)

Observer statistical handbook 2003 E-03-04), the state produced (in '000 tonnes) 13,951 of rice, 796 of wheat, 14,851 of cereals, 217 of pulses and 558 of oilseeds. As per the Census of India (2001), West Bengal ranks first in terms of production of rice, and second in terms of production of potato in the nation (about 15 percent and 34 percent respectively of the national production). The state also accounts for 60 5 percent of jute and 21 3 percent of tea produced in the country as a whole

The land reforms and the panchayati raj programme initiated by the Left Front dismantled the stranglehold of the feudal class in rural West Bengal The Left Front claims that the state's socioeconomic development has been possible due to the new village-level panchayat leadership According to a Planning Commission study, prior to 1958, about 97.7 percent of the panchayat members came from landlord families (cited in Basu et al 1997 vii). In West Bengal, the trend has been changed. It is claimed that nearly 71 percent of the members of the panchayats in the state now come from the ranks of small and marginal farmers with land holdings below five acres Women constitute more than 36 percent of all the representatives in the panchayats

Education, Health and Housing

Even though heavily criticised by many, the Left-Front government claims that it has established order and decorum in the educational system, which, prior to Left Front's assuming office, was seen in a state of disarray Educational opportunities now have been expanded. According to official figures, the literacy level in West Bengal has risen consistently, from 44 percent during its first term of office that began in 1977 to 48 6 percent in 1981, 57 7 percent in 1991, and 69 22 percent in 2001 (the literacy rates for males and females in the state being 77 58 percent and 60 22 percent respectively) The number of primary schools increased from 35,788 in 1980 to 52,426 in 2001 Enrolment and per capita expenditure on education have also gone up considerably. According to the Annual report 2000-2001 of the Ministry of Education, West Bengal has 52,385 primary/junior basic schools, 3,019 middle senior basic schools, 7,233 high/higher secondary schools/intermediate pre-degree/ junior Colleges, 389 colleges, sixty-six professional educational schools, and fourteen universities/institutes of national importance (quoted in India 2003 Observer statistical handbook 2003 O-07). Enrolment in West Bengal public schools rose considerably during the last five years During 1997-98, total number of primary, middle, secondary and higher

secondary school students in West Bengal was 12,869 (in '000s) This number rose to 15,326 (in '000s) during 2001-02

True to its creed, the Left-Front government claims to patronise progressive and democratic cultural movements to increase awareness of the masses. This increased awareness is claimed to have freed West Bengal from communal and sectarian conflicts frequently experienced by a number of other Indian states.

In regard to health care, the government claims to have given special attention to the rural and urban poor, and to problems related to poverty The infant mortality rates (per 1,000 live births), though still quite high, are down from 91 (rural 98, urban 44) in 1981 to 51 (rural 53, urban 38) in 2001 Similarly, the combined rural and urban death rate per 1,000 population in 2001 was 68 (rural 70, urban 6.4) as compared to the death rate of 11 (rural 122, urban 69) in 1981 In the field of population control, there was some progress too Over the last two decades, West Bengal seems to have made a marked achievement in decreasing its birth rate, from 33 2 (rural 370, urban 200) in 1981 to 205 (rural 228, urban 138) in 2001

Despite its limited resources, the state has been providing for housing to an increasing number of its masses. The West Bengal Housing Board oversees construction of new houses to suit the needs of various income groups. The government has recently involved the private sector in its housing projects. It is recognised that the government has far more to do in this regard than it has done thus far

Peace and Stability

Another area in which the Left Front has been successful is its ability to keep the state relatively free of communal and caste strife which has plagued other parts of the country during the last two decades. It seems that leftist ideology and communalism are opposite sides of a pole. While much of India experienced communal clashes along religious lines following the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992, the state of West Bengal, except for a few minor incidents, largely escaped this experience. The Left Front's advocacy and stance for correcting historic wrongs is also worth citing. The 1990 Mandal Commission Report is a case in point. Given the general scarcity of jobs in India and huge ranks of the educated unemployed, the Mandal Commission recommended that jobs be reserved for socially backward castes—a recommendation that created widespread resentment among the unemployed in India. However, because of the Left-Front government's supportive attitude toward the underclass, the reaction among the Bengalis toward

the Commission's report was nothing but positive. The secular credentials of the Left-Front government are strong and intact

Other Social Services

The state government started a variety of other social service schemes for the welfare of the poor and the destitute Beginning in 1994-95, a fund was started to provide margin money, bank loans and subsidies to the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes-a scheme which has reportedly benefited about 112,000 families Similar effort has been made to help the tribal families as well. The Integrated Child Development Service Scheme offers supplementary nutrition, health care, immunisation and pre-school education to children of up to 6 years of age It also provides expectant and nursing mothers with health care, nutrition and health education The scheme has covered about 2.5 million beneficiaries Among other services, the following are notable supplementary nutrition to young girls along with training in environmental sanitation, personal hygiene and vocational trade; financial help to widows and the disabled, setting up of a commission to recommend legislative and judicial action for the redress of grievances of women in the state, establishment of a vagrants home as a drive against beggary and vagrancy, where inmates are trained in handicrafts for their rehabilitation, and, finally, programmes for tackling unemployment through selfemployment schemes and a small-scale entrepreneurs programme

Industry

The state of industries in West Bengal is, perhaps, the most questionable part of its development problems. As noted earlier, Bengal was industrially prosperous before and during the British period and immediately after independence. Because of the partition of Bengal in 1947 and the influx of large number of refugees from the former East Pakistan, the state's economy was badly hit. Furthermore, the eastern states of India, including. West Bengal, fell victim to what they considered to be a systematic discrimination on the part of the central government policies, which clearly favoured the western and the northern states of India at their cost (see Roy 1973).

Despite the alleged discriminatory policy of the central government and the political convulsions of partition, there appears to be a silver lining, even though faint, in the industrial horizon of West Bengal Land reforms initiated in the state have resulted in a marked improvement in the agricultural sector, with the result that rural purchasing power has

gone up considerably This has created a new market for industrial products in West Bengal Industries related to seeds, fertilisers, implements, agro-processing and horticulture have also improved considerably

The communist-dominated government's initial industrial policy laid stress on the development of cottage and small-scale industries However, it could not, for long, ignore the reality of the globalisation of the economy that was electrifying the rest of the world Towards the end of the 1980s, the state was forced to reorient its industrial policy. While it still is opposed to the unregulated entry of foreign capital into West Bengal, it now welcomes new technology and investment in selective spheres, where they could help the state's economy and, at the same time, serve the interest of all parties concerned For the first time, the importance of the private sector in providing accelerated growth was recognised Also recognised was the fact that no industrial regeneration was possible without a simultaneous infrastructural development. These were no mean changes These indicate a change in the face of communism, perhaps, forever The policy of promoting industrialisation with the help of private and foreign capital has already started yielding some results In a twenty-year progress report, the Left-Front party bosses claimed, somewhat flamboyantly, significant success (see Basu et al 1997 xxxvi)

As an act of obeisance to its ideology, the Left Front still declares self-reliance to be its ultimate objective. Since the state links its policy of economic growth to its version of equity, justice and self-reliance, it realises it has a long way to go towards realising its industrial potential within the government's ideological framework. However, it sees the people as appreciating the state's constraints—financial and constitutional—within which it has to operate. This, the Front claims, is demonstrated by the results of the parliamentary election of 2004.

Failures

In general, for communists anywhere, the party is the supreme authority, and communists in West Bengal are no exception. The party enforces its diktat through an ideologically charged cadre that does not hesitate to use any measure, fair or foul, necessary to attain party objectives. Although the CPI(M) is just one of the ten parties in the Left-Front alliance, it is, nevertheless, the dominant party, and can, and allegedly often has, through its cadre, adopted roughshod tactics to push its way through

Lawlessness

The tactics referred to above and detailed throughout this section, resulted, more often than not, in allegedly reckless and bullying behaviour, including acts of violence, by some Left-Front, especially CPI(M), functionaries for the purpose of bringing in line recalcitrant members of the public or even party members currently gone astray, to get them to come back to the fold and support the party programme. Such activity is characterised as 'people's resistance' Newspapers often carry accounts of harassment, insult, beating, looting and even murder as means to achieve this end. There are allegations of an unholy alliance between the Party, the police and criminals. Often, when a seemingly political murder takes place, the police are inclined to view it as the result of a turf war among criminals patronised by the party. As columnist Bhattacharjee (2000) observes, a very thin line divides people's resistance from anarchy

Writing in the same vein a few years ago, another commentator referred to the ongoing violent confrontation between the CPI(M) and the Trinamool Congress, a regional party of West Bengal led by Mamata Banerjee, for supremacy in the state politics

The recent escalation of violence between the two parties must be seen against the backdrop of the May 2000 civic elections in Calcutta and the districts, which will be the test run for the assembly elections next year. The death toll since the last panchayat poll has risen to 50 Six thousand houses have been burnt. Unruly gatherings by both parties have become common, the pressures of one-upmanship have led to unprecedented acts of arson, murder and violence (Prasad 2000).

This, according to the opposition, is the erosion of rule of law in the state of West Bengal

Religion

Critics such as Bhattacharjee (2000), Kamath (1999) and Prasad (2000) have charged the West Bengal communists with terrorising the entire population of the state and, in tune with their godless ideology, running down the major religion of the country, namely, Hinduism, as well as one of the most revered Indian institutions, namely, Sri Ramakrishna Mission, named after the great sage of Bengal, Sri Ramakrishna They once drove the Mission authorities to become desperate enough to disclaim being a Hindu institution so as to escape the tirade of the CPI(M)

cadres The CPI(M), notes Kamath (1999), has no compunction in throwing mud at religion and religious beliefs

Education

One of the trusted means of any collectivist party is the educational policy through which to socialise (or indoctrinate) the masses in ways it considers correct. The CPI(M) has long been charged with trying to colonise the institutions of learning. The CPI(M) admits this freely According to a leading Calcutta daily, The telegraph (17 March 1999), CPI(M)'s own mouthpiece, Ganashakti, reported 'There is nothing new in reports that our organisational team oversees the affairs of different universities in Bengal As a matter of fact, communist party teams have been looking after party interests in institutions of higher learning since 1953 'The Party is not only interested in controlling appointments to key university-posts but in looking after the institutions of higher learning The daily adds that such an admission is a testimony to the fact that CPI(M) sees nothing wrong in this The Party appoints all the Vice-Chancellors of the universities in the state Kamath (1999) quotes one official of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, one of the constituent parties of the Left Front, as saying 'In most cases, teachers are appointed to colleges and universities on the basis of their political affiliation and not merit

Kamath (*Ibid*), among others, has charged the Left-Front government with dangerously politicising the field of secondary and higher education, and generally failing in the most basic of the educational missions, that is, to improve the literacy of the people. While the government claims that millions of people have been made literate during its administration, the state of West Bengal has fallen from the fifth place in literacy, which the state had been in between 1981 through 1994, to the seventh place among the major states in India in 2001. The number of teachers, it is alleged, has decreased, not only because of a lack of funds to pay salaries, but also because of the misuse and diversion of what is available

In its report on a study on the status of primary education in West Bengal, the Pratichi (India) Trust expressed grave doubts about both the quality and quantity of the instruction imparted to the pupils. The report concluded that most of the goals of primary education in West Bengal were simply not met in the schools (*Pratichi education report* 2002)

Industrial Development

Despite the claims of success made by the Left Front in the matter of industrial development in the state since 1977, it is still a big question mark As noted earlier, soon after the Left Front came to power, there was a flight of capital because of CPI(M)'s pronounced support of labour at the cost of capital, its anti-private sector orientation, and not too subtle encouragement to industrial workers and labour leaders to declare strikes and work-stoppages Among the companies that moved out of West Bengal were such industrial powerhouses as ICI, Brooke Bond, Philips, Britannia, East India Hotels, the JK group, Gestetner, several divisions of R P Goenka group, Shaw Wallace and Dunlop Tyres The power situation in the state did not help matters, as the state's power supply during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s became precarously low Hours and hours of load-shedding became the order of the day for both industry and households, which caused suffering on a massive scale. Industrial production fell sharply Although the power supply improved over the years throughout India, the demand for power also rose sharply because of the increasing industrialisation of the country, with the result that almost all the states in India, except for West Bengal and Orissa, experienced power deficits According to the Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation, West Bengal and Orissa were the only states with surplus power capacity of 0.9 percent and 3.1 percent respectively in 2000-01 (see India 2003 - Observer statistical handbook 2003 P-11) With the exodus of industries from the state and the labour situation vitiated by frequent strikes, power remained unutilised Very few ventured to start new industries in West Bengal

The Indian economy ali through the years since the independence had been sluggish largely because of, first, the structural constraints and the federal regulations imposed on the growth of free enterprise through what is known as its 'license and permit raj' policy, and second, heavy interference by and involvement of the state with the country's trade, industry and commerce. West Bengal is a prime example of this sluggishness. Given its leftist ideology, the state government looked down on private enterprise and denied the industries the suitable infrastructure to grow and operate profitably. The industrial situation in India, however, reversed course in 1991, when the then Indian government initiated major economic reforms which indirectly affected the state of West Bengal, too. The state tried to lure back the capitalists to the state with somewhat attractive schemes and inducements, however, without much success.

The branch of the government formed to bring about the industrial revival, the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC), has apparently failed to bring any change into the industrial infrastructure According to one report, the WBIDC shelved eighteen of the twenty-eight projects after spending more than Rs 1 26 crore in 1997, and more than twice that amount the previous year (Essenjit 1998 633) Essenjit reported that twenty-six industrial units downed their shutters in 1997 alone (*Ibid*) The units were closed because of either lockout or strike The per capita gross factory output and per capita value added in industries in West Bengal in 1992-93 were respectively Rs 2,941 and Rs 597 as against an all-India average of Rs 4,228 and Rs 817 The percentage share of West Bengal's total value of ex-factory industrial output declined from 9 8 in 1980-81 to 5 6 in 1992-93 (*Ibid*)

It is clear that West Bengal has lagged far behind other states, especially in the industrial sector, all through the Left-Front rule. Did the government take development work seriously? The erstwhile Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, seemed to have given an answer to this question recently in an address to the press immediately prior to his retirement. He admitted to having a persistent fear that a communist government would not be allowed to continue for long by the Central Government, and this prevented the Left-Front government from taking development work seriously. The leadership was somewhat paranoid and suffered from a persistent fear psychosis that it would soon be dismissed by the Centre As one report suggests.

It was this 'misjudgement' that prompted the Left Front to adopt the role of a rabble-rouser and 'street fighter' and neglect administration in the process, at least during the first decade in power By the time the realisation of the damage that had been done dawned, Basu seemed to suggest, it was already too late to repair the damage' (Banerjee 2000)

Sadly, this legacy continues in West Bengal Among 20,868 foreign direct investment projects approved in the country between 1991 and 2001, the state's share was only 571, ranking it as seventh among the major states in the country (*India 2003 - Observer statistical handbook* 2003 I-11) Similarly, among 3,691 cent percent export-oriented units in the country during the same period, West Bengal's share was a mere 98, ranking it as eleventh among fifteen major states (*Ibid* · F-35) According to the Reserve Bank of India data, the state was near the bottom among major states to receive assistance for its projects from the State Finance Corporations (*Ibid* G-33)

Poverty

India, by and large, is still a poor country despite her recent mark as a software giant and the promise of her becoming the fastest growing economy in future (see Venugopal 2003) According to the *Human development report 2002* (see *India 2003 - Observer statistical handbook* 2003 R-01), in regard to economic performance, India's GDP is a mere US \$ 457 billion as compared to those of the advanced industrial countries such as the United States of America (\$ 9,837 4 billion), Japan (\$ 4,841 6 billion), Germany (\$ 1,873 billion), United Kingdom (\$ 1,414 6 billion), and France (\$ 1,294.2 billion), and even that of China (\$ 1,080 billion)

West Bengal is, and has been in recent decades, one of the poorer states of India. The most recent data in regard to the level of poverty among fifteen major states of India, West Bengal has the sixth highest poverty ratio, namely, 27 02 (rural, 31 85, urban, 14 86), with Punjab having the lowest ratio of 6 16 and Orissa having the highest ratio of 47 15 (see *Ibid* M-08) The Planning Commission's figures in 1999-2000 for percentages of people below the poverty line in West Bengal were 31 85 and 27 02 for rural and urban areas respectively

It does not take much imagination to link the state's poverty to lack of employment opportunities in the state. It is pertinent to mention that West Bengal has the second highest rate of unemployment in the country. Again, according to *Planning Commission report 2001*, the unemployment rate in the state went from bad to worse during the last fifteen years or so. In relative terms, rural areas did somewhat better in regard to poverty. According to one study, improved agricultural performance during the Left-Front's term of office appeared to have reduced the incidence of rural poverty significantly through the trickle down effect, a process that seemed to have been in operation in West Bengal. Additionally, increase in labour productivity was found to have a stronger effect in reducing rural poverty than any other growth process (see Ghosh 1998). This reduction in poverty does not, however, apply to the urban centres of West Bengal.

Estimation of poverty in India has been made by different scholars using a variety of methods. A meaningful approach in this regard has been developed by the Kolkata-based All India Institute of Health and Hygiene that takes into account dietary norms along with state-specific retail prices. According to the Institute, in general, the average Bengali diet (rice, milk, vegetables and fish) conforms to the intake of 2,400 calories per capita per day for rural areas and 2,100 calories per capita per day for urban areas. Following this guideline, Biswajit Chatterjee

(1998) calculated the monthly cost of the recommended diet and addec an appropriate non-food component expense to arrive at the poverty line Part of Chatterjee's data (see 1998 3008) is summarised in Table 1

Measures	1973-74	1977-78	1983	1986-87	1988-89
Poverty-line per capita per month (Rs)	62 95	72 29	124 51	139 14	156 33
Head-count ratio (%)	79 42	76 85	74 95	60 50	53 10
Head-count ratio for ultra poor (%)	66 74	64 70	58 83	38 27	32 60
Number of poor (millions)	29 40	30 94	31 47	27 07	25 00

Table 1 Poverty and inequality in rural West Bengal

Source National Sample Survey Organisation (various years)

Chatterjee reminds those reading the table as to the crucial role nature plays in determining the fate of agriculture, and hence, poverty or respite from it, in a particular year Natural calamities such as drought, excessive rain and flooding can play havoc with the farmers' lives, thereby depleting the farmers' already meagre resources According to Chatterjee, the very high rural head count estimate for 1973-74 (nearly 80 percent) is partly due to the prevalence of drought that year In 1977-78, there was heavy rainfall and floods in many parts of the state. The estimates for 1973-74 and 1977-78 indicate poverty during the worst of times. Between 1986 and 1989, the state had relatively good and steady rainfall, and this reduced the incidence of rural poverty considerably. In other words, nature, too, had a role to play in determining whether or not the agriculturists would be poor

Let us turn to Chatterjee's interpretation of urban poverty. As against the gradual reduction of poverty as in the rural areas, the urban areas tell a different story. A summary of Chatterjee's data (1998–3009) is presented in Table 2.

Measures	1973-74	1977-78	1983	1986-87	1988-89
Poverty-line per capita per month (Rs)	69 51	90 00	129 00	175 51	188 42
Head-count ratio (%)	53 00	58 22	46 71	45 15	44 19
Head-count ratio for ultra poor (%)	35 72	53 61	30 77	30 88	25 00
Number of poor (millions)	3 80	6 00	, 7 00	7 17	7 24

Table 2 Poverty and inequality in urban West Bengal

Source National Sample Survey Organisation (various years)

The question of poverty remains a burning and contested issue, as scholars using a variety of measures arrive at different conclusions. Some even express a doubt about the gradual reduction of poverty in rural areas. According to Ross Mallick (1993) 4, see also 1992, 735-50 and 1994), poverty among the rank and file agriculturists still persists, and a closer examination would reveal that the CPI(M)'s policies have largely benefited the rural middle class and the upper class interests while merely distributing 'palliatives' to the lower classes.

West Bengal vis-à-vis India as a Whole and Other States

One way to evaluate the performance of the Left-Front government is to check how well or badly it has done over the years since it came to power Therefore, it seems pertinent to examine the state of affairs in West Bengal vis-à-vis India as a whole and other states with regard to some selected characteristics/variables which would throw light on the state of her socioeconomic condition. Data about these characteristics/variables, however, are not always available in a systematic fashion.

West Bengal is the fourteenth largest state in India with an area of nearly 89,000 square km and a population in excess of 80 million people Among the notable successes the state ranks very high in the production of food grains (rice and cereals), jute and mesta, small-savings collection, unorganised manufacturing enterprises and employment in these enterprises, and cropping intensity Between 1980 and 2002, fish cultivation increased 291 percent. It also ranks high in the area of development expenditures as well as plan and non-plan expenditures. The state is the seventh most literate among major states in India, its literacy rates in 2001 being 77 58 percent for males and 60 22 percent for females. The state's urban literacy stands at 81.6 percent and rural literacy at 64.1 percent The state falls short in the areas of promotion of industrial development, employment generation, industrial output, energy generation and consumption, and a peaceful and stress-free civic and working life According to Planning Commission report 2001, the state's unemployment rate has been high, and is worsening over the years-8 13 percent in 1987-88 (third highest in the country), 9 87 percent in 1993-94 (again third highest), and 14 95 percent in 1999-2000 (second highest) (see India 2003- Observer statistical handbook 2003 N-08)

Given the data offered here thus far in regard to variables under consideration, Tables 3 and 4 present a summary picture of some selected aspects of human development in West Bengal in the context of its standing in India as a whole, and the state's ranking among major states in India respectively

Table 3 West Bengal and India Selected aspects of human development

Indices	West Bengal	India
Human Development Index value 2001 (calculated out of		
15 major states only)	0 472	0 472
West Bengal's Human Development Index rank (out of 15		
major states)	8	39 36
Human Poverty Index 1991	40 48	39 30
Human Poverty Index rank (out of 32)	20	-
Per capita net state domestic product (at 1993-94 prices, Rs), 1998-99	8,900	9,647
Percentage of persons in labour force, 1999-2000	55	62
Percentage of population below poverty line - 1999-2000	27	26
Literacy rate – 2001 (%)	69	65
Male literacy rate – 2001 (%)	78	76
Female literacy rate – 2001(%)	60	54
Rural literacy rate – 2001 (%)	64	59
Rural male literacy rate – 2001 (%)	74	71
Rural female literacy rate – 2001 (%)	54	47
Urban literacy rate – 2001 (%)	82	80
Urban male literacy rate – 2001 (%)	86	86
Urban female literacy rate – 2001 (%)	76	73
Teacher-pupil ratio (primary school), 1999-2000	54	43
Life expectancy at birth, 1992-96 (years)	62	61
Life expectancy at birth (rural) 1992-96 (years)	61	59
Life expectancy at birth (urban) 1992-96 (years)	68	66
Infant mortality rate – 2000	51	68
Under 5 mortality rate – 1991	94	94
Under 5 mortality rate (male) – 1991	94	91
Under 5 mortality rate (female) – 1991	92	101
Maternal mortality rate – 1998 (per 100,000 live births)	-266	407
Percentage of children underweight (-2 SD), 1998-99	49	47
Percentage of houses with access to safe drinking water	82	62
Percentage of houses with access to toilet facilities – 1997	50	49

Source Adapted from *National human development report 2001* (downloaded in the html version of the file http://www.undp.org.in/Programme/undpini/tactsheet/westbengal.pdf)

Discussion and Conclusion

At the time the Left Front was emerging on the political horizon of West Bengal, the state was in disarray with no leader of national calibre to lead it. The legacy of an unkind past and quandaries of the present cast a deep shadow over the state. West Bengal was hurting badly and there was no relief in sight (Roy 1973), then emerged the Left Front with its radically



Table 4 West Bengal's rank among other states on selected characteristics/ variables

Characteristics/Variables	Rank and year	
	data gathered	
Number of the LC	2	
Number of registered factories	8 th (1999-2000)	
Total number of main workers (rural)	5 th (2001)	
Total number of main workers (urban)	4 th (2001)	
Gross energy generated	9 th (2000-01)	
Energy consumption per capita	11 th (2000-2001)	
Unorganised manufacturing enterprises	1 st (2001)	
Employment in unorganised manufacturing enterprises	1 st (2001)	
Employment generation (in 100,000 human days)	8 th (1995-96)	
Percentage distribution of main workers to total	10 th (1991)	
population (urban)		
Percentage distribution of marginal workers	10 th (1991)	
to total population (urban)		
Percentage distribution of owner households	(1992)	
Marginal households (85 88%)	2 nd	
Small households (9 48%)	8 th	
Semi medium (3 94%)	8 th	
Medium (0.71%)	8 th	
Large households (0%)	- -	
Value of output	8 th (1999-2000)	
Net value added by manufacture	8 th (1999-2000)	
Average rural monthly per capita expenditure on	9 th (2000-2001)	
Consumer goods (including food)	A	
Average urban monthly per capita expenditure on	6 th (2000-2001)	
Consumer goods (including food)		
Per capita expenditure on food only	7 th (2000-2001)	
Developmental expenditure by the state government	5 th (2001-2002)	
Plan and non-plan expenditure by the state government	4 th (2002-2003)	
Total cropped area	9 th (1998-1999)	
Cropping intensity (%)	3 rd (1998-1999)	
Production of food grains		
Rice	1 st (2001-2002)	
	2 nd (2000-2001)	
Total cereals	3 rd (2001-2002)	
Total pulse	11" (2001-2002)	
Total lood grains	3 rd (2001-2002)	
Educational institutions (number of schools)		
Primary	5 th (2000-2001)	
Middle	12 th (2000-2001)	
Secondary/Higher secondary	6 th (2000-2001)	
Overall	6 th (2001)	

Table 4 continued

Characteristics/Variables	Rank and year data gathered
i	2
Student enrolment in educational institutions	
Primary education	5 th (1998-1999)
Middle education	5 th (1998-1999)
Secondary/Higher secondary education	7 th (1998-1999
Literacy rate	7 th (2001)
Small savings collection	1st (2002-2003)
Length of roads	7 th (1999)

Source Adapted from Statistical handbook - West Bengal 2002, 2003, and India 2003 - Observer statistical handbook 2003)

pro-people programmes and policies The state responded enthusiastically and elected the Front from among a host of other parties, including the renowned Congress Party—the party of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru—freely and democratically

The Left Front came to power on the promise of (a) ridding the state of what it called a bourgeois-feudal order, (b) legislating reforms for social and economic justice, (c) empowering masses of people who were poor and dispossessed, and (d) leading the state toward a progressive social order. The initial years brought many positive changes in the rural areas. The landless sharecroppers got land of their own, agricultural production got a boost, panchayat raj brought democracy to the grassroots, and poverty began to go down. It should be noted that many of these achievements have not received their due recognition in the halls of the establishment because of the supposed radical politics of the Front and its over-enthusiastic cadre.

The Left-Front's record in urban West Bengal, however, has been indifferent. The government's pro-labour, anti-industry policies drove many industries away, creating unemployment, loss of tax revenue for the state, and a sense of alienation and unrest, especially among the educated youth. Driven more by ideology than pragmatism, the Front helped inculcate a militant workforce that was able to paralyse work at the drop of a hat. Faced with an uncertain future, many industries left the state. Those that remained have not done that well. The Front's record with respect to creating more jobs has been limited at best and unsatisfactory at worst.

Riding on its initial success, especially in the rural areas, the Left Front waded merrily through election after election because of lack of a viable challenge until recently, most of the other political parties being

invisible, inept or perceived as corrupt What strengthened the Left Front in the main can be attributed to an organised and dedicated cadre, selective patronising, and rabble-rousing. It gave voice and power to the poor who, in turn, became attached to the government because of the many benefits they received from it, for example, subsidised rationing. The poor also became a large vote bank for the Front. No other party had talked to the poor before and the poor had no reason to believe that any other party would get them any better deal or care any differently. So why change?

Even behind the Front's success in the rural sector, some have seen a flip side. Since the Front operates through its cadre at the grassroots, it is the cadre that calls the shots. As columnist Shibi Alex Chandy noted, 'The rural empowerment has created a dictatorship of lumpens in the hinterland—a place where the party official's word is law and there is no room for non-believers' (2000)

Some happy tidings for the Left Front, however, should be noted The situation with regard to power supply has changed for the better recently According to recent statistics, the state has a surplus in the matter of power supply when most other states are reeling under severe power shortages. Some of the social indexes of West Bengal have also recorded improvement. The numbers living below the poverty line in the rural areas have gone down Among the major Indian states, West Bengal stands fifth and first respectively in the number of primary and secondary educational institutions (1997-98), is first in per capita expenditure in food (1995-96), fifth lowest in infant mortality rate (1997), and fourth lowest in general death rate. However, the government has not been able to make major strides in areas such as medical care, housing, employment and environment The state-run hospitals everywhere are overcrowded and short of equipment, personnel and medicines In sum, the state is neither at the top nor at the bottom when compared to other Indian states, it is, at best, just slightly better than average (see The telegraph 2001)

In its rather late attempt to undo the damages inflicted by its industrial policy, the Left-Front government has been trying to woo the corporate sector to come back to the state. It is too soon to tell if these attempts will bear fruit. The results thus far have not been very promising

The communists of West Bengal, like communists anywhere else, operate best when they can proceed with their agenda without having to deal with any opposition political party. However, opposition is a 'given' in any democracy, as is the case with India. Although the CPI(M)-led Front came to power democratically, it either did not always have the

disposition or the know-how to pursue its programme through democratic means. It slowly started acting like any other political party in India. It made compromises, diluted or paid lip service to a number of its ideological goals, and circumvented many of the principles of democracy it blamed other political parties of committing. Then, there were the cadre and their roughshod tactics. The successive electoral triumphs of the Front for over a quarter century have not been picturesque in terms of democratic process. There were reports of collusion between the politicians, the police and the criminal elements in pursuance of the objectives of either the party or its bosses or even their underlings, not, of course, without the blessing of some of the leaders of the Front. The urban electorate was more resilient to pressure than their rural compatriots. The Front scored successes in the rural areas but lost more often than not in Kolkata and other urban centres.

Interviews with some early supporters of the CPI(M), granted to the present author on the promise of anonymity, revealed that the fall from ideological rigor, alleged undemocratic process, and violence led some of them to leave the Party They claimed to be purists and true believers who championed the rights of the poor and the underclass, and wanted to establish the foundations of a non-exploitative society. They saw the Left-Front administration as a negation of the very principle that it was founded upon

Except for achievements in the realm of agriculture and some limited to moderate success in a few other fields, the performance of the Left-Front government in West Bengal has generally lagged in comparison to other major states in India, especially in the fields of economics, industry and commerce. The Left Front professes to champion equality of distribution but during its administration of more than a quarter century, it has not been able to develop a prescription for growth and prosperity, and, by extension, for the wealth of the state Logic would suggest that Bengalis as rational voters would have at some point voted the CPI(M) out of office However, they have not One must, therefore, explore alternative scenario(s) for an answer to the intriguing question as to why the CPI(M) and its multi-party coalition have continued to win the support of a majority of the voters

An enquiry of this nature could fruitfully be explored through sociology of knowledge which thrives on philosophical introspection and intellectual speculation. Given this perspective, knowledge is taken to be a social product and all knowledge is seen as socially constructed.

Bengal's rich cultural and political history, exploitation of her riches and later subjugation by foreign aggressors, her reaction through mass movements, protests and revolutionary actions, simultaneous emergence

of the 'babu' culture of the 'bhadralok', political turmoil through partition, the influx of millions of refugees, the gradual deterioration of her quality of life and large-scale deprivation of one kind or another—all these helped shape a mindset that became suspicious of affluence and material success. It came to be widely held among the poorer segment of the population that no one could be rich and prosperous without recourse to unfair means and machinations. Scepticism and negativism found a hospitable environment in which to grow A worldview that justified distributing the resources, even by force or stealth, no matter who made what contribution towards the production process, became the modus operandi among large segments of the population. An ideology that championed equality of distribution found a happy home in West Bengal Private ownership became an anathema

Another scenario worth calling attention to may be stated at this point Human development indicators (for example, higher-than-average literacy and life expectancy, lower-than-average infant mortality, and absence of communal conflicts, very high production of rice and fish, and therefore, greater availability of preferred staple food for the Bengali masses) suggest that factors that make up quality of life might be more important determinants of political behaviour in West Bengal than just economic factors The rural support for the CPI(M) seems to be related to empowerment of masses of people through reallocation of land and enactment of what the party and its supporters consider 'progressive' laws This would certainly lend support to the idea of party loyalty When party identification is strong, voters do not shift loyalties even when the party is not efficacious in managing the economy This explanation, of course, would be an anathema to those subscribing to the western paradigm that places economics as a determinant of political behaviour

As to why there has been prolonged electoral success of the communists only in West Bengal and not in other states of India, the answer, perhaps, lies imprinted in the Bengali character, a subject outside the realm of the present research. An insight in this regard has been offered by Nirad C. Chaudhuri (1988) who has sought an explanation for the Bengali national character through British scholar John Stuart Mill's notion of 'fatalism of the Oedipus', and Bengali novelist Bankimchandra Chatterji's concept of 'destiny' or 'adristobad' (through which the author tried to explain his heroine's disposition in his epic novel Kapalkundala) Chaudhuri sees Bengal's unique history and geography determining the dharma of Bengali character, its positive as well as negative characteristics, that led the state to great heights in the nineteenth century as well as to its decline after 1917-18. If this seems a bit

mystical, one should be reminded that Eastern values have to be understood in the context of the often-dualistic philosophical system of values which view with uneasiness an 'absolute system of values' (see Mehta 1978, Nandi 1980)

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Identity Politics in the Hill Tribal Communities in the North-Eastern India

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Talking about 'identity politics' in the tribal communities one thinks in terms of politics centring on the demands of 'preservation of identity'. The tribal communities in the north-eastern region have been expressing fears of losing their identity as a result of increasing interaction with the non-tribal communities. They have been articulating demands for further constitutional and administrative provisions to safeguard their 'tribal' identity. The dynamics of identity politics in the region and their impact on the socio-political relations among the tribals themselves and between the tribal and the non-tribal communities becomes meaningful if seen in the historical perspective. This article examines the issue of identity politics in the context of the historical experiences of the hill tribes in the north-eastern region of India since the colonial period.

Introduction

Issues of 'identity politics' have been discussed by sociologists in their studies on ethnic groups in modern states whose citizens belong to different communities. The communities that I am concerned with here are the tribal communities inhabiting the north-eastern parts of India. These tribes inhabit their own territories (homeland), and live not as fragments but as communities. These communities are designated as 'tribal' by the Constitution of India without consideration of any anthropological definition of tribe. These communities have accepted this label while referring to themselves and, therefore, I also refer to these communities as tribal without attaching any special meaning to the term 'tribal'

In this article, I have tried to examine the issue of identity politics in the context of the historical experiences of the hill tribes in the northeastern region of India Without the historical perspective, I think, it is difficult to understand the dynamics of identity politics in the region and their impact on the socio-political relations amongst the tribals themselves and between the tribal and the non-tribal communities With such an approach, we should be better able to understand the self-perception of these communities as 'tribal'

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The Identity Question

Issues of identity have arisen in such states where various communities are posited side-by-side in an unequal state of development. While this inequality need not necessarily take a hierarchical form, it definitely results in unequal opportunities to take advantage of the resources of the state. The less-developed communities feel threatened in the company of their more-developed counterparts. The leaders of the less-developed communities raise an alarm over the imminent danger of extinction of their communities due to the aggressive use of the resources by the more-developed communities in the neighbourhood.

The less-developed communities fail to exploit the available resources due to lack of requisite skill and lack of control over the resources. They raise the demand for the protection of resources from exploitation by the more-developed communities. They even demand exclusive rights over these resources for use at a future date when their members are ready to do so

In a welfare state, ways are devised to enable the less-developed communities to come up to the challenges of competing with the more-developed communities in an open market situation. The competition is faced more in the economic and political spheres as compared with that in the social sphere. As efforts made by the state to create awareness of the rights in the minds of the members of the less-developed communities start yielding results, the demands start getting articulated by the newly aware members who assume the leadership of their communities.

Talking about 'identity politics' in the tribal communities one thinks in terms of politics centring on the demands of 'preservation of identity'. The tribal communities in the north-eastern region have been expressing fears of losing their identity as a result of increasing interaction with the non-tribal communities. They have been articulating demands for further constitutional and administrative provisions to safeguard their tribal identities.

Identity Politics in the North-East India

My focus here is on the political actions of these tribal communities keeping their 'identity' on the centre stage People, as a collectivity, participate in the political processes of the state to give expression to their identity. One such field of activity in which the identity of a community gets manifested is the arena of electoral politics. Some other activities could be in the form of protests—non-violent or violent.

Since 1960, the issue of identity has been surfacing periodically in the north-eastern region. Assam saw violent language riots between the Bengali and the Assamese populations of the state when a Bill seeking to make Assamese the official language of the state was introduced in the Assembly. It recurred in 1972 when a decision was taken to adopt the Assamese language as the medium of instruction at all levels of education. In between followed the movement of the hill tribals for separation from the then composite state of Assam and having their individual states within the Indian Union. The states of Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya were all earlier districts in the composite state of Assam Meghalaya, however, was carved out of the composite state of Assam by combining the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district and the Garo Hills district.

Once these demands of the hill tribals were conceded there started the conflicts between the tribal and the non-tribal populations in the hill states Bodo, the plains-tribals of Assam, have succeeded in getting their territorial council within the state of Assam, and the violent movement of the hill tribals is still going on in Tripura. The hill tribes of the Karbi Anglong and the North Cachar Hills in the state of Assam have been agitating for separate hill states under the banner of Autonomous State Demands Committee (ASDC) since the time of the hill states movement in the region. The popularity of ASDC could be gauged from the fact that since its inception it has been winning all the seats in each of the elections for the Assembly and the Parliament from the constituencies falling within their areas.

The Locale and its Demography

Before I proceed further, let me describe the location of the tribal communities in the north-eastern region. These communities are spread over the seven states (popularly known as 'the seven sisters') of the region Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. All these states are surrounded variously by Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, and Myanmar. Each of these north-eastern states is a mosaic of tribes living largely on the hilly areas. Inside the country, Assam has borders with each of the other six states.

According to the Census of 1991, the population (both tribal and non-tribal) of the north-eastern region accounted for 3 73 percent of the total population of the country. The scheduled tribe (ST) population of the region was 11 97 percent of the total ST population of the country and 0 96 percent of the total population of the country.

population of the region accounted for one-fourth of the total population (both tribal and non-tribal) of the region

The following picture emerges if these seven states are arranged in a descending order of their ST populations Mizoram (94 75%), Nagaland (87 70%), Meghalaya (85 53%), Arunachal Pradesh (63 66%), Manipur (34 41%), Tripura (30 94%), and Assam (12 69%) In the last three states, the tribal populations inhabit mostly the hilly areas, whereas the plains areas in the case of Assam and Tripura and the valley in the case of Manipur are occupied predominantly by the non-ST populations. It is noteworthy that 53 37 percent of the ST population of the region lives in the states of Manipur, Tripura, and Assam, though the first four states are commonly referred to as the tribal states of the region. Furthermore, even the 12 69 percent tribal population of Assam is more than the national average of tribal population (that is, 8 00%)

Another common feature is that these states are multi-tribal in composition. In the absence of accurate data, it would be hazardous to guess the number of tribes in each state. No two sources of information tally on this aspect of empirical detail. For example, Nagaland consists of several tribes clubbed together as the Naga, their number varies from 14 to 41 tribes depending upon the source cited. However, some Naga tribes inhabit the hills of Manipur as well. Same is the case with the number of tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, depending upon the source cited, their number ranges from 20 to 110. This, of course, has no reference to their counterparts across the international borders.

Identity Formation through Historical Experience

Accounts of the lifestyles of the hill tribes became available in the English language only after the advent of the British rule in these areas, that is, after the mid-nineteenth century. Some accounts of their interaction with the people in Assam are available in Ahom and Assamese buranyis (the language of the Ahoms), and some of these are now translated into English. All these accounts make it clear that the intensity and frequency of inter-tribal interactions gradually increased manifold during the last nine centuries or so. The historical experience of these tribes over this period has helped in the formation of their tribal identity.

From a simple village and lineage identity, the tribal communities have followed the course of a long history to reach the status of present day identity. The membership of a village, besides that of a clan, was an important source of identity without which a person had no *locus standi* in the society. Village identity was necessitated in cases of inter-village.

feuds and, in some tribes, in enhancing one's status by committing acts of valour, for example, headhunting

Identity in terms of the lineage/clan becomes important for expressing kin-group solidarity and in choosing one's affinal relatives Membership of a lineage was also important in order to distinguish between those who were the descendants of the founders of the village and those who were the descendants of the later settlers in the village This identity difference is important in matters relating to land distribution and membership rights in the village council

New forms of identity emerged gradually through continual interactions with neighbours of either similar cultures or different cultures. These interactions were in the form of co-operation and conflict. There are many instances where an initial phase of conflict turned into one of co-operation and interdependence though with occasional clashes. Before the arrival of the British in the region, some hill tribes along the borders of Assam had maintained trade relations with the people in the plains. Tribesmen from the villages bordering the Ahom territories (now in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh) had even fought wars on the side of the Ahom.

The British had divided the hill areas into two categories based on their levels of development and accessibility Excluded Areas, and Partially Excluded Areas The North-East Frontier Tracts, the districts of the Naga Hills and the Lushai Hills, and the North Cachar Hills subdivision of the Cachar district were designated as the Excluded Areas, and the Garo Hills district, the Mikir Hills, the British portions of the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills district other than the Shillong Municipality and Cantonment were classified as the Partially Excluded Areas. The accessibility to the areas under the former category was restricted for the British subjects by the introduction of the Inner Line Regulation The government was not interested in allowing the extension of trade activities into these areas, across the Line, by the plainspeople, as it found it extremely difficult to collect taxes from there Moreover, by restricting the entry of their subjects, the government reduced the risks to their lives from the attacks by the tribals

The Partially Excluded Areas did not have any such restrictions. These areas were located on the southern and western boundaries of Assam, and on the hills of the present day Assam. Their terrain was not as rugged as that of the Excluded Areas, and the inhabitants of these areas had more intimate economic and political contact with Assam. Tribes of these areas were more advanced than those of the Excluded Areas. Some restrictions though were put on the plainspeople in these areas as well. The plainspeople living there could not purchase land

without the permission of the Deputy Commissioner Rohini Kumar Chaudhury, a member of the Constituent Assembly from Assam, complained during the course of the debate on the Sixth Schedule to the draft Constitution thus. '.. I living in Shillong cannot purchase property from any Khasi except with the permission of the Chief of the State or with the permission of the Deputy Commissioner I have no right to purchase any property in the tribal areas' (see Hansaria 1983. A-65)

The differential treatment of the people on the hills and in the plains by the British officers was guided by their differential perception of these two categories. The British mindset becomes clear when one reads the observations of Robert Reid, the then Governor of Assam on the tribes under his administration 'They are not Indians in any sense of the word, neither in origin, nor in language, nor in appearance, nor in habits, nor in outlook and it is by historical accident that they have been tacked to an Indian Province' (see Syiemlieh 1989–188)

The British wanted to keep the tribes under the Excluded Areas segregated from the influence of the people in the plains of Assam by arguing that the latter would exploit the tribals to their detriment Such an approach of the British affirmed a sense of identity in the minds of the tribals which made them look at the 'fellow tribes' as similar but different from the plainspeople The tribals came to look upon their non-tribal neighbours with suspicion as 'exploiters' The extent of the spirit of segregation becomes clear from an interesting observation made by Rohini Kumar Chaudhury, during the course of the debate referred above 'There was a Deputy Commissioner who used to flog any Naga who was dressed in Dhoti' (see Hansaria 1983 A-64)

During the visit of the Indian Statutory Commission to Assam in 1928, the constitutional position of the Lushai Hills (presently Mizoram) came in for discussion The Assam Government recommended that

the Lushai Hills should be excluded from the Province of Assam for obvious reasons [] There was no sympathy on either side and the union of the plains and hills was an unnatural one. The Legislative Council [of Assam] was not willing to bear the burden of the administration of the deficit districts like the Lushai Hills. The people in Assam Valley felt that their own political growth and the material development was being thwarted by their being yoked with the Hill districts (Rao et al. 1987, 11).

V V Rao et al further wrote that 'Sadullah said that the Lushai Hills was inhabited by semi-civilised aborigines. They had nothing in common with the people of the plains. Sadullah's views were not contradicted by the politicians of the Plains' (*Ibid* 13). The extent of dislike is evident

from the fact that some Lushai leaders had preferred to be attached with Burma and not Assam after the departure of the British from India

Missionaries, engaged in their vocation of conversion, needed to translate the Bible in the languages of the communities of the region. They introduced the Roman script in all the tribal communities. It is noteworthy that the Khasi were given the Bengali script by a Bengali missionary. He had attempted to translate the Bible for them in their language by using the Bengali script. However, later the script was changed to Roman. Such attempts once again show the efforts made by the British rulers to give the tribals an identity of being different from their neighbours living in the plains. With the help of the script, the missionaries were able to give a codified religion to the tribal communities. A new set of moral values was imparted to them by constant preaching and through the Sunday Schools run by the missionaries.

Khasi and Jaintia had more intense interaction with the people in the plains of Assam and Sylhet (now in Bangladesh) through trade. Their communities were economically and politically more developed than other tribal communities in the region. Their religions, influenced by the religion of their Hindu neighbours, were better organised. Missionaries did not find it so easy to convert the entire populations of these communities to Christianity. They met with resistance from the followers of the indigenous Khasi and Jaintia religions who formed religious associations (called the Seng Khasi and the Sein Raij respectively) to safeguard the followers of their religions. No single Christian sect or denomination could monopolise a single tribe, though a particular Church may have its following larger in numbers than others in a particular area in the region. This, of course, is true of all the states in the region.

The British policy was not to give a free field to the missionaries, though some of the officers were in favour of letting the missionaries come in for their conversion work. A way was found to support the missionaries financially and otherwise by treating them as school-teachers. However, they were not encouraged to work in those areas which were considered difficult even for the administrators to work. The missionaries were allowed to work only in those areas where the British had established their administration effectively. The British administration could not penetrate deep into the areas now covered under Arunachal Pradesh. Consequently, no conversion activity by the missionaries could be encouraged in such areas. The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, therefore, followed either their indigenous religions or Buddhism in some parts. So was the case with the interior areas of Nagaland and Mizoram in the earlier years.

The cases of the Khasi Hills, the Jaintia Hills, and Arunachal Pradesh show that Christianity could not be considered as the sole factor responsible for the development of identity in the tribal communities. Some tribes in Tripura also remained outside the influence of Christianity

As a result of the efforts in the field of modern education, some bright tribal boys from both types of areas were given financial assistance to go out as far as Calcutta (now Kolkata) for higher education. Shillong had also acquired, in the meantime, the reputation of a place of excellent school education and attracted students from various parts of the region. Over a period, these tribes started building their reserve of educated youth, some of whom found employment in the government bureaucracy in various capacities, particularly as clerks and interpreters for the British officers. More articulate of these youth emerged as political leaders of their communities. In some cases, the tribals employed in bureaucracy too, provided the political leadership while in service.

If the Excluded Areas were closed to the ordinary plainspeople, there was no restriction on the Indian plainspeople employed in bureaucracy and the British and other European and American missionaries. Over a period, some people from outside the Excluded Areas were brought in to give services of various kinds, which could not be provided by the tribals of those areas to the British civil and military officials and the missionaries. Masonry and carpentry were two essential services required on a regular basis. All such people settled in these areas in course of time, and some of them even married the local girls. Of course, the number of such persons was not sizeable.

Another significant consequence of this interaction was the development of link languages for various tribes of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh respectively Prior to the development of the link languages, these tribes could not communicate with each other verbally Today different Naga tribes communicate with each other through the link language known as the Nagamese, which is based on the Assamese language, and its vocabulary draws words from Assamese, Bangla, Hindi and Urdu, besides some of the Naga languages Same is the case with the different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh who communicate with each other in Nefamese, consisting of words from the languages of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh (known then as the North-Eastern Frontier Agency or NEFA), besides the other languages

The British administration brought the different tribes in peaceful proximity of each other by establishing administrative and military townships. People from different tribes employed by the British were brought to settle in these urban areas. The link languages emerged as a medium of communication among the tribals and between the tribals and the

plainspeople settled there By enhancing the intensity of interaction among the different tribes, link languages have reduced the social distance between amongst them in the administrative and the economic spheres. The link languages, consequently, paved the way for the emergence of common political identities among them

On the other hand, areas not covered by the Inner Line Regulation saw a change in the demographic ratio between the populations of the hill tribals and the plainspeople Not only the political administration but the economy also slipped, gradually, under the control of the plainspeople who were more educated and had better familiarity and linkages with markets in other parts of the country Besides education, they had the knowledge of the languages spoken in the plains of India where existed the network with the national markets. In other words, it can be said that the areas not covered by the restrictions of any kind were left prone to influences of all kinds from the outside world.

People from the Partially Excluded Areas sent up their representatives in the Assam Legislative Assembly and thus participated, as equals with the plainspeople, in the political processes of the state. This right was not given to the people from the Excluded Areas. However, the British had permitted restrictively the avenues of interaction of the hill tribals with the plainspeople even in the Partially Excluded Areas. This policy resulted in a relationship of mutual suspicion between the tribals and their non-tribal neighbours in the region.

The arguments advanced in the Constituent Assembly by the nontribal members from Assam against the draft of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of independent India throw light on the nature of such a relationship between the hill tribes and the plainspeople from Assamtheir immediate neighbours. If the British had thought that the hill tribes were different from the people in the rest of India, the plainspeople from Assam ('the Indians!') had also found them to be different If the British had wanted to keep them separate and preserve their culture, these 'Indians', on the contrary, had wanted unbridled interaction with the tribals so that they could be 'assimilated' into the culture of the plains (that is, Assam) Rohini Kumar Chaudhury declared during the debate, 'We want to assimilate the tribal people We were not given that opportunity so fai The tribal people, however much they liked, had not the opportunity of assimilation' (see Hansaria 1983 A- 65) Chaudhury was so vociferous in his arguments that he criticised the members of the the British mind is still there. There is the old Drafting Committee ' separatist tendency and you want to keep them away from us You will thus be creating a Tribalistan just as you have created a Pakistan The ultimate result will be that you will create a Communistan, '(Ibid A-

53) He was reacting strongly to the provisions in the draft which wanted to continue with many of the restrictions on a free interaction between the tribals and the plainspeople Clashes between different perceptions of identity become clear in the responses given, in return, by a leader of the tribals and the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India

the arguments of the Assamese non-tribal members, explained at length the difference between the 'hierarchical culture' of the plainspeople and the 'egalitarian culture' of the hill tribes in the region (*Ibid* A-74- A-76) B R Ambedkar (Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India) in his reply to the debate observed that the tribals in Assam were different from the tribals in other parts of India in the sense that they had preserved their own culture and did not get assimilated in the culture of the larger community around them The debates in the Constituent Assembly brought out sharply the mutual suspicion between the hill tribals and the plainspeople from Assam The hill leaders made it amply clear that they had always wanted to keep a safe distance from their non-tribal neighbours

Manipur and Tripura, the two princely states in the region, were treated differently by the British In 1891, the British declared Manipur to be a 'subordinate native state' and, in 1907, the British took the position that the hill areas were merely 'dependent' on the Manipur Maharaja The hill tribes in Manipur could be divided broadly into two parts those bordering Nagaland, inhabited by some Naga tribes, and those bordering Mizoram, inhabited by the Kukis and the Mizos The Kukıs claım affinity with the Mizos Kukı, an umbrella term like the Naga, is applied to the tribes which had migrated from the Chin Hills of Burma to Manipui and Assam The Kuki are divided into the Old Kuki group and the New Kukı group on the basis of their period of migration The first list of the scheduled tribes in Manipur designated the hill tribes either as Naga or Kuki However, the tribes classified thus resented the nomenclature as it affected their individual tribal identity Consequently, a modification was issued in 1965 enlisting the various tribes by their names Only the Thadou tribe has accepted the name Kuki for itself

The rule of the Maharaja of Tripura extended from the hills of Tripura (known earlier as Tippera) to the plains areas (Chakla Roshanabad) now under Bangladesh The Maharaja of Tripura was given a dual status by the British he was treated as a Maharaja for the hill territory, and as a Zamindar for the territory in the plains The hills were inhabited by a number of tribes Some of these tribes were indigenous and some

others had migrated from Burma and the Chittagong Hills tracts Lushais inhabited the hills on its borders with Mizoram

Early Symptoms of Identity Assertion

By the 1920s, one can see the emergence of a generation of tribals who could assert their views against the British interference in their customary practices and petition the British to safeguard their institutions, particularly the political and the economic

Politics in the hills started at different times with different issues in the region. In the 1920s, the chiefs of the traditional states of the Khasi aligned together as the Khasi National Durbar. They tried to codify the Khasi customary land laws. Rev. Nichols-Roy, one of the prime movers of this Durbar, tried to introduce a structural change in the Khasi society by advocating changes in the customary succession law from matrilineal to patrilineal. However, he did not succeed in this move. What he did not realise, perhaps, was that by advocating for such a drastic measure he was trying to change the matrilineal identity of the society. It clearly shows that the 'crisis in identity' is not to be seen only when some attributes of culture are affected. It may also be experienced when an effort is made to change the very structure of a society.

The political acumen of the Khasi leaders came to the fore when they started participating in the active electoral politics of Assam from the 1920s. This can be discerned further by examining the different memoranda submitted by the contending Khasi groups to the visiting Indian Statutory Commission. During its negotiations with the government, the Khasi National Durbar demanded a legal status for the traditional chiefs as the representatives of their society. Their claim was contested by a group of educated Khasi citizens some of whom had landed interests in various parts of Shillong. The latter objected to the practice of leasing out the community land by the chiefs to the British Government in contravention of the traditional practices and customary laws.

The aforesaid contention needs some elaboration. The British had treated the chiefs as equivalent to the rulers of the princely states in India who used to exercise control over the resources of their states. However, the chiefs in the Khasi Hills did not have any such powers and the land systems in the hills were very different from what existed in other parts of India. The British erroneously treated the village population as the subjects of these traditional chiefs. Whenever the British officers needed land for their use, they would make the chiefs lease it to them, for which the latter were not empowered as per the customs of the society. Land was not under the control of the chiefs, but under the community, and the

former had no authority over its distribution let alone its alienation from the community under any pretext. It seems that the Khasi chiefs had wanted such a misconception to continue and get legitimacy, as the rulers, from the British after their departure from India. The people were contesting such claims of the chiefs

Concerns about the lack of respect shown by the British officers to the tribal customs are visible in the protests of Jobang D Marak, a Garo MLA ' [Jobang D Marak] protested that "some Deputy Commissioners disdain some of their customs on account of which some innocent persons suffered extremely severe punishments" (Chaube 1973 64)

The 1937 elections in Assam resulted in the formation of a coalition government Political manoeuvrings, in its aftermath, generated tension which ultimately resulted in a Khasi-Bengali riot in Shillong. The riot was first of its kind and it paved the way for a long history of tribal and non-tribal suspicion and hostility. Campaign against the Bengalis heated up once again during the next elections.

The Khasi-Jaintia Political Association, a body under the patronage of the chiefs, submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet Mission of 1946 demanding a 'federation of the Khasi areas within a "sovereign Assam", with adequate "cultural and political autonomy" (*Ibid* 68)

Although it appears that the tribes were unified in their demand for the preservation of their culture and political autonomy, yet one would argue that it meant one thing for the chiefs and another for the 'commoners' For the former, it meant safeguarding their position as the chiefs, while, for the latter, it meant an opportunity to participate in the democratic political institutions, though without the interference from the plainspeople They abhorred the idea of letting the non-tribals participate in the political processes, particularly in the electoral politics, with them They were worried that the non-tribals, whom they had never trusted, had the potential of upsetting their traditional political equations at the elections

Towards the close of their rule, the British introduced the system of District Conference in the Lushai Hills By this time different organisations had come up in the Lushai Hills districts of Assam—for example, the Chiefs Conference (consisting of the Lushai chiefs), the Mizo Union (a people's body), and the Women's Union The Mizo Union, a party espousing the aspirations of the common Mizos was not enthusiastic about the District Conference (which had equal representation of the traditional chiefs as well) They wanted to do away with the institution of Chiefship They preferred merger with India rather than demand an independent territory after the departure of the British The Mizo Union

sought the help of Gopi Nath Bardoloi, a Congress leader from Assam, in their effort to abolish this institution and in return it promised to join the Indian National Congress. Chiefship was abolished in 1954-55 from the Mizo district. Since the other Hill districts in Assam never went for such a bargain, the District Councils had to satisfy themselves only with the power to regulate the appointment and succession of Chiefs, who occasionally resent the encroachment of the District Councils on their "traditional rights" (Ibid. 106). It appears from the evidence of Bawichiaka before the Bardoloi Sub-Committee that Mizos from outside the district were the greatest advocate of the district's integration with India' (Ibid. 161-62). These Mizos were living and working outside Mizoram and saw a better future in being a part of the Indian Union.

The above cases indicate the increasing distance between the traditional chiefs and the people in these tribal communities. These cases also indicate that traditional chiefs as leaders were now being replaced by a new leadership having no necessary links with those clans which had traditionally held power in their communities. These attempts at curbing the role of the traditional chiefs heralded the emergence of a new political identity in the tribal communities of the region.

The case of Nagaland was different from that of the other hill districts. The term Naga gives a false impression of a unified tribe, whereas there existed, in the past, several tribes with their autonomous villages in the territory now known as Nagaland. A Naga without a clan or village membership was inconceivable

The British officers were not in favour of reforms in the Excluded Areas They prompted the Naga Club to represent their case before the visiting Indian Statutory Commission in 1929. The Naga Club had come into being in 1918 through the efforts of some British officers and consisted of, besides some village headmen, some educated Nagas and the *Dubhashis* (Nagas employed by the British as interpreters). The Club argued against the inclusion of the Nagas within the ambit of the proposed reforms, and pleaded that they be left to themselves after the departure of the British from India. The memorandum submitted by the Naga Club echoed the views of the British Officers that the Nagas were of a 'race' different from that of the plainspeople of Assam

The text of the memorandum is very revealing, even if some one were to doubt the representative character of the Club It referred to the difference amongst the various tribes clubbed together as the Naga 'Our country within the administered area consists of more than eight tribes, quite different from one another with quite different languages which can not be understood by each other and there were tribes which are not known at present' (quoted in Nag 2000 30) As we read further we get

an idea of their 'identity' vis-à-vis their neighbours ' we were living in state of intermittent warfare with Assamese of the Assam valley to the north-west and the Manipuris to the south of our country. They never conquered us, nor were we ever subjected to their rule' (*Ibid*). They stressed further that ' if we are forced to enter the council the majority of whose members is sure to belong to other districts, we also much fear the introduction of foreign laws and customs to supersede our own customary laws which we now enjoy' (*Ibid* 30-31). The intensity of their feelings of pride could be gauged from their plea that ' we should not be thrust to the mercy of the people who could have never conquered us themselves, and to whom we are never subject, but to leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times' (*Ibid*)

In 1945, the British advised the Nagas to form the Naga Hills District Tribal Council to give their views on the proposed Crown Colony. The Nagas rejected the idea of the Crown Colony, and, in 1946, they decided to form the Naga National Council (NNC). Gradually, the NNC shifted from its welfare aims to foster political aims with a view to unite all the Nagas to achieve common political aspirations. The NNC took a rigid stand that it could be with India only on the explicit condition that after ten years the Nagas should be free to choose their own course. However, the NNC lacked unanimity on the issue of independence from India Although the Naga Hills was declared a district in the then composite state of Assam, after 1947 the demand for independence remained alive under the leadership of A Z. Phizo.

All Tribes Naga Peoples' Convention was convened in the middle of 1957 to settle the issues between the Government of India and the Naga rebels. The Convention passed-an_interim resolution', as the rebels did not attend the deliberations. Eventually, the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area (Administration) Regulation was passed in 1957. As a result of further negotiations, the Government of India passed the Nagaland (Transitional Provisional) Regulation, 1961. The political activities resulted in the passage of the Nagaland Act by the Parliament in 1962 to pave the way for the formation of the state of Nagaland, which came into being in December 1963.

In the case of Nagaland, one observation would be in order here. As mentioned earlier, Nagaland is the abode of different tribes having their own histories and cultures. Their being part of a single state does not necessarily mean the negation of their differences. They retain their individual identities in all spheres of joint activities whether underground or overground. The crucial role of these identities can be seen in the emergence of various factions among those still fighting for the cause of

an independent country for the Nagas as well as in the formation of various political parties at work in Nagaland as part of the Indian Union

Following inferences can be drawn by the foregoing overview of the history of the hill tribes in the region

- 1 The history of these tribes changed its course after the British decided in favour of direct intervention in the affairs of the tribes for their own colonial interests
- 2 The British political intervention and development of infrastructure (rudimentary though in the Excluded Areas) paved the way for interand intra-tribal interactions
- 3 The contribution of the Christian missionaries in the field of education, besides religion and health, helped in the creation of leadership in the tribes which later played crucial role in the political processes of independent India
- 4 The awareness and the set of values acquired by the tribals enabled them to examine some of their customary practices critically. The new set of values made them aware of their rights in the modern sense of the term. Questions were raised about the functioning of the traditional chiefs in some communities. In the case of Mizoram, the people succeeded in abolishing the institution of the chiefship from their society.
- 5 The perspective of the educated tribals enlarged beyond their immediate surroundings and they started pondering over the future of their society. They started comparing their situation with that of the tribals in other parts of India. They could now analyse the differences in their cultures and the cultures of the dominant non-tribal communities.
- 6 The Bengalis and the Assamese were the two non-tribal communities in their immediate vicinity. The Bengalis were employed largely in the government bureaucracy and were identified as the representatives of the rulers. However, the Bengalis were themselves in a 'foreign' land (in the hill districts), as they had largely come from the eastern parts of Bengal (the parts now under Bangladesh), and were in no position to become rulers themselves. The Assamese, living on their own 'land' in immediate the neighbourhood, were identified as the potential rulers by the tribal communities.
- 7 Consequently, the tribals always suspected the Assamese and feared about the future of their communities in their company. They had the examples of the tribals in other parts of India who had come under the influence of their Hindu non-tribal neighbours and had lost their individuality. The statements made by some of the Assamese members from Assam in the Constituent Assembly caused great anxiety in the tribal minds.

8 The tribals had no choice but to be part of Assam after independence Their fears came true soon when Assam moved the Official Language Bill to make Assamese the state language

- 9 At the time of independence, the leaders of India inherited a legacy from the British from which it was difficult to deviate substantially for the sake of unity. The tribes wanted the same protections under the new dispensations as they enjoyed during the British rule. The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution was framed to allay the fears of the tribal communities. NEFA was put under a separate administrative arrangement due to its exceptional backwardness.
- 10 Religion did not play a significant role in the identity politics in the region. It might, at best, have played a supportive role in politics

Constitutional Provisions in Independent India

The Constitution of India made special provisions, under the Fifth and the Sixth Schedules, for the administration of the Scheduled and Tribal Areas. The Sixth Schedule applies to the tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram, the Fifth Schedule, to the scheduled areas in the rest of the country. However, the hill areas of Manipur, totally inhabited by the tribals, and the tribes in the plains of Assam are not covered under the provisions of either of these two Schedules.

The Sixth Schedule provides for the administration of the Tribal Areas as autonomous districts and autonomous regions. It further provides for Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) for the former and the Regional Councils for the latter. The ADCs are endowed with legislative, executive and judicial powers. These councils are empowered to constitute village councils and village courts. No law of the Centre or the State in respect of the legislative powers of these councils could be extended in those areas without the prior approval of these councils. The states of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh are governed under various sections of Article 371 of the Constitution.

In addition to these provisions, the Constitution provides measures for the upliftment of the scheduled tribes by reserving posts in employment, and seats in the educational institutions and in the legislative bodies. The Inner Line Regulation is still in force in the states of Nagaland, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh

Hill State Movement

The issue of 'identity politics' in the tribal communities of the northeastern region cannot be understood without a discussion of the Hill State Movement in the region. The history of this movement brings into focus the emergence of tribal leaders and throws light on their aspirations and political manoeuvrings. The hill politics started in full earnest in the areas covered under the Sixth Schedule when the Chief Executive Member of the Garo Hills District Council, Captain Williamson Sangma, 'convened a meeting of the Chief Executive Members of the District Councils to "discuss things of mutual interest". It was held at Shillong on June 16-17, 1954. '(Chaube 1973–111) The meeting focused its deliberations on two major issues formation of a separate hill state, and amendment to the Sixth Schedule Sangma quoted a resolution of the Asom Jatiya Mahasabha which said that 'the areas opposed to Assamese as a State language should be severed from Assam'. He argued that 'If this was the attitude of the plainspeople there was no alternative to demanding a Hill State' (Ibid). After a prolonged discussion, a resolution was drafted which stated that

'In the wake of the provisions of the Sixth Schedule, the people have felt that this autonomy is very defective. The younger generation especially are feeling very unhappy and they see that they will, in time, be extinct. The fear of their future destiny naturally makes them feel that it will be far better for them to have a Hill State of their own' (Ibid. 112) (emphasis added)

However, the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills and the Lushai Hills were not in favour of a separate hill state and wanted only greater autonomy for the District Councils Their attitude throughout the movement remained lukewarm and the initiative remained with the leaders from the Khasi, the Jaintia and the Garo communities Although none of the tribes under Assam had any disagreement on the basic issues, their perceptions of the course of action differed as per their own ground realities. It also means that they did not want to come under a single hill state, but wanted to be independent of each other. They wanted exclusive and bigger grounds for political participation on various local issues of concern to their communities rather than playing politics of accommodation on the larger issues of mutual interest under a single hill state. These political compulsions weighed heavily during the course of the movement. It is interesting that none of the tribes abandoned the idea of a joint movement, but the intensity of their responses varied in accordance with the perception of individual gains at the tribe level

Although Naga Hills was a non-Sixth Schedule area, its leaders were invited by some Khasi leaders to join the movement, but the invitation was turned down politely by Phizo, the Naga leader spearheading the movement for independent Nagaland The only material gain for the

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tribal leaders in all the Sixth Schedule districts was in terms of popularity in electoral politics and erosion of the base of the Indian National Congress in these districts Of course, other national parties had yet to gain a firm foothold in these areas

The tribal leaders gave a hint to the other national parties that they would be invited to participate in the electoral politics in the new set-up of the hill state. It appears that the invitation contained a covert appeal for support in their endeavours. As against the situation in Nagaland, the leaders in these districts had made their intentions amply clear that they wanted exclusive political arena for electoral politics along with other national political parties, but on the agenda of their 'identity preservation'.

Within a decade after independence, these tribal communities experimented with political articulation by throwing up various political parties, some of which were the breakaway factions of the existing parties. An effort was made to accommodate the emerging diverse opinions under the banner of Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) as an umbrella organisation. The effort proved to be stillborn, as many parties were averse to the backing of the Khasi traditional chiefs to this organisation.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister, eventually succeeded in persuading the tribal leaders to participate in the Indian National Congress-led government in Assam and, to restore their confidence, B P Chaliha was brought in as the Chief Minister of Assam The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, however, had its own local political compulsions to care for. For the sake of survival, it again passed a resolution demanding the immediate introduction of Assamese as the state language. The passage of this resolution clinched the issue of separation for the hill leaders.

Convening themselves now as the All-Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC), the tribal leaders asserted that

the acceptance of the Assamese language, now or at any time, which would place the Assamese in a more dominant position, will lead to the assimilation of all the Hill people in the Assamese community, thereby gradually leading to the disintegration of their identity as distinct communities in India, which identity has been given recognition and protection under the Constitution (*Ibid* 120)

The leaders further expressed fear that the 'adoption of Assamese as the official language of the State will adversely affect the opportunities and prospects of the Hills people in the Government Services and other avocations notwithstanding any amount of safeguards which can always be circumvented' (*Ibid* 121)

Finding the Assamese leaders unrelenting, the Conference set up a Council of Action to chart a course for separation from Assam It assured the non-tribal populations of the hills the protection of their interests in case the plan of Hill State came through

It can now be said that the issue of language found a common cause with the people of all the hill districts and served as a plank to launch a vigorous movement for separation from Assam This, however, should not suggest that the various hill districts had the imposition of Assamese language as the only grouse Language was the common cause serving as the force of unity among them They had their other individual grouses relating to the issues of development of their areas and the governmental efforts to settle the non-tribal refugee populations on the hills

While the hills of Manipur are largely inhabited by the Nagas and the Kukis, those in Tripura are inhabited by a variety of tribes. The hill politics in these states has yet to take the shape of identity politics as in the other hill states.

In 1956, the Naga groups in Manipur took to arms in support of the demand of an independent Nagaland On the other side, the Mizo-inhabited areas joined the movement of the Mizo Union of Mizoram for the unification of Mizo-inhabited areas of Manipur with the Lushan district of Assam Incidentally, the hills suffer from a Naga-Kuki rivalry as well. The Kuki traditional chiefs, divested of their powers, supported the armed movement of the Mizos. Consequently, the issues relating to the individual tribal identity have not found relevance yet in the hill areas of Manipur. Of course, a relationship of mistrust and implicit hostility exists between the people of the valley and the hills.

The case of Tripura is different in the sense that, after its merger with the Indian Union, the Bengali population outnumbered the tribal population on the hills. The majority of the Bengali subjects of the princely state of Tripura were in the plains, after the partition of India, the majority of Hindu Bengalis chose to migrate to the hills, a portion which merged with India. In the aftermath of the spate of communal riots in the then East Pakistan, more Bengali Hindus migrated to Tripura. This population settled down in the forests used by the tribals for shifting cultivation, thus causing hardship to them. In addition to this, the Bengalis also took charge of the politics of the state. Tripura is under the rule of the leftist political parties. The government enacted legislation to restore the land to the tribals which they had lost to the Bengali moneylenders and others. The tribals and the non-tribals have taken up

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arms against each other in Tripura The tribals in Tripura are fighting to throw away the yoke of Bengali (non-tribal) dominance

Current Scenario

The current scenario is one of political domination by the tribals over the plainspeople living in the hill states. This domination is more pronounced in the erstwhile Partially Excluded Areas than in the Excluded Areas. The number of people from the plains is less in the erstwhile Excluded Areas due to the promulgation of the Inner Line Regulation by the British and its continued enforcement by the Indian government after the independence. In the Excluded Areas, consequently, the tribals always had a better control over the political situation.

Although the tribals have now gained control over the political sphere, the sectors of economy (particularly the secondary and the tertiary) are still dominated by the plainspeople Some of the plainspeople have acquired land, over a period of time, in the urban areas of the hill states

At the time of breaking away from the composite state of Assam, a number of plainspeople, serving in the government bureaucracy, had opted to stay back in these new states. The tribals neither had the capital nor the linkages required for business. However, they did have sufficient humanpower which was educated and in search of employment. They felt a sense of competition with their neighbouring communities from the plains living in the state. The challenge of unemployment could be tackled partly with the help of the provisions of reservation in employment for the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes Mutual understanding had to be reached amongst the various tribes in the same state over the distribution of these jobs Finding these jobs insufficient, attention was turned towards the jobs in the private sector. These efforts were not peaceful, and often the youth had to agitate and take to the streets in pursuance of their demands. The result of these agitations, which often turned violent, was that the plainspeople eventually started employing the local tribals in their commercial establishments

Another effect was that the plainspeople ultimately gave away the political leadership to the tribal leaders. Now the tribal leaders started winning elections from the unreserved constituencies as well with the support of the non-tribal voters. The interesting point is that all this was done under the name of preserving the tribal identity. The slogan of identity preservation has established the divide between the tribal and the non-tribal populations firmly. The tribal leaders in the hill states, particularly in Meghalaya, often cite the case of Bengali domination in

Tripura as an example of the loss of identity by the tribes in Tripura The non-tribal domination in Tripura serves as an example whenever the Khasi leaders exhort their fellow tribesmen to be vigilant against the increase in non-tribal population in the state. It serves as the justification for the demand for more restrictions on the economic activities of the non-tribals in the state. Such restrictions, imposed under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, help in reducing competition between the tribal and non-tribal populations in the arena of open market.

The equation of development and underdevelopment did not alter even after the creation of separate hill states for the tribals. Earlier it was between the Assamese plainspeople and the hill tribals, now it is between the various tribes themselves in the same state. The less-developed tribes in these states, being in numerical minority, are feeling dominated by the tribes, which are in numerical majority. Feeling neglected, these tribes have started demanding either more autonomy or separate states for themselves. On the other side, the more-developed tribes have started to see the less-developed tribes as a 'burden' on the resources of the state. This is perhaps the reason why the Khasis are supporting the demand for a separate 'Garoland' put forth by a section of the Garos in Meghalaya. Even the official websites of these states do not give a list of all the tribes in their states—a practice indicating varied status given to the various tribes in the tribal states.

The old conflict between the traditional power structures and the modern power structures keeps surfacing repeatedly. The ADCs, modelled on the principles of legal-rational authority deriving legitimacy from the Constitution of the country, became superior to the traditional political institutions, while the latter, based on traditional authority and deriving legitimacy from the norms of the society, feel constrained in the exercise of their powers. The authority of the two institutions runs parallel on many matters. The traditional chiefs resent this as interference in their exclusive affairs. Sometimes, however, questions are raised, by some sections, on the utility of the ADCs.

Identity politics manifests itself in the efforts to preserve the provisions under the Sixth Schedule Few years ago, the Khasi Students Union in Meghalaya started an agitation for the inclusion of the Khasi language under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India The students thought that by such recognition their language would be recognised by the Union Public Service Commission as a medium of writing the various competitive examinations conducted by it Some of the Khasi intellectuals appealed to the leaders of the Union to call off the agitation and withdraw the demand. They argued that the inclusion of their language in the Eighth Schedule would mean that their language is developed

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and its natural corollary would be that their society was also developed The intellectuals warned the students that in such a case their society would lose all the concessions enjoyed so far under the Sixth Schedule The Union dropped its demand. After some years, this demand was raised again by the Union, and this time it found the support of those who had opposed it earlier and also the sympathy of the government.

Cases like the one cited above and others bring out the dilemma faced by the tribal communities while playing the politics of identity. If they choose the path of economic development, they are worried about loosing their 'tribal identity' and all the benefits associated with it. If they do not choose the path of development, they face danger to their survival

It seems that the feeling of suspicion between the tribal and the non-tribal populations stands in the way of resolving this dilemma. Any step towards economic development is viewed as a step towards increasing interaction with the non-tribal population. The fear is that the latter would, in such a situation of interaction, eventually overpower the tribal population in matters of control over their resources—political, economic and social. They still have fresh in their minds the examples of the condition of the tribes in other parts of India, who seemed to have merged in the 'identity' of their non-tribal neighbours.

Notes

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- 1 For convenience, Myanmar would be referred by its old name, 'Burma', in this paper
- 2 It is noteworthy that the Christian missionaries were alway's preaching the concept of nuclear family and promoting male as the head of the household in matrilineal communities of the Khasi and the Jaintia A female head of the family appeared un-Christian to them What they did not realise was that, while bringing a change in one aspect of culture (religion), they were trying to force a change in the structure of the society They, however, did not succeed in such attempts
- 3 By this time, the hill districts of Assam, under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, were administered by the District Councils
- 4 For example, the Sailo clan in the Mizo society

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Narratives of Sickness and Suffering: A Study of Malaria in South Gujarat

Purendra Prasad

This paper attempts to understand why tropical disease situation, particularly malaria, has remained alarming in India even to this day, despite significant scientific and technological advancements and interventions by both the state and the non-state (national and international) agencies. It argues that the conceptualisation of sickness and suffering, or for that matter of health, varies greatly between groups of sufferers and groups of healthcare providers, including the policy makers. Moreover, in addition to the inaccessible health services, unequal resource availability, lack of education, etc., the very process of identification of sickness—in this case malaria—also contributes to the worsening disease situation leading to high morbidity and mortality in rural India. This was evident in a study of a malaria endemic region, namely, Surat district of Gujarat.

The Latin word disease literally means the absence of ease, which is defined as a bio-pathological process that affects the organism. As Karl Popper (1972–106) says, for the clinician, disease is experienced as present in the body. For the sufferer, however, the body is not simply a physical object or physiological state, it is an essential part of the self. Thus, disease is considered as a medical view of ill health, whereas illness is a much broader phenomenon than disease (see Young 1982, Turner 1987, Kidel 1988, Good 1994, Boyd 2000)

Illness refers to the individual's subjective awareness of the disorder This awareness is articulated primarily through language. While the 'disease model' argues based on the mind-body dualism, the 'illness model' questions this reductionist theory. However, both disease and illness models take the individual as their object. Moreover, the illness model is interested in the issue of medical efficacy, that is, augmenting clinical medicine by way of enhancing patient education, remedying problems of non-compliance, and challenging maladaptive course of treatment.

On the contrary, the social relations or sickness model questions both the biomedical model of disease as being equivalent to sickness and the explanatory model of disease as being equivalent to illness. Neither of these models explains the sociological background and context of sickness. Accordingly, physicians tend to think of non-health as disease,

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psychologists, as illness, and sociologists, as sickness (see Twaddle and Hessler 1987) Allan Young defines the concept of sickness comprehensively as follows

the process through which worrisome behaviour and biological signs, particularly ones originating in disease, are given socially recognisable meanings, that is, they are made into symptoms and socially significant outcomes. Every culture has rules for translating signs into symptoms, for linking symptomatologies to aetiologies and interventions, and for using the evidence provided by interventions to conform translations and legitimise outcomes. The path a person follows from translation to socially significant outcome constitutes his/her sickness (1982–270)

This definition gives primacy to the social relations that produce the forms and distribution of sickness in society and recognises the wider social context. According to Young, therefore, the task is not simply to demystify knowledge but to critically examine the social conditions of knowledge production. The sickness model is interested in medical productivity and not efficacy alone, that is, identifying the direct and indirect impacts of particular clinical practices and perspectives on the levels of morbidity and mortality of the population at large (*Ibid* 279)

Historically speaking, after the Renaissance, medicine has been characterised by a shift from person-oriented to object-oriented cosmology. Hence, it is always individuals who become sick, rather than social, economic or environmental factors which causes them to be so. As such, disease became more important than the sick person. Hence, while it is important to understand the conceptual differentiation between 'disease', 'illness' and 'sickness', it is also necessary to recognise that these concepts are no more than analytical categories. This is because, in the real world, it is difficult to separate the biomedical perception, the self-perception and the social perception. As long as there is this clarity of thought, it does not matter whether 'disease', 'illness' or 'sickness' is used to define suffering. The sociological understanding of suffering is that the patient is not an abstract being, but of a certain age, sex, caste, class and nation, and that he/she has internalised a specific historical experience from childhood to adulthood

A critical medical social science forcefully poses the question of when illness or sickness representations are actually misrepresentations which serve the interests of those in power, be they colonial powers, elites within a society, dominant economic arrangements, the medical profession, or empowered men Critical analysis investigates both the mystification of the social origins of disease wrought by technical terminology and metaphors diffused throughout medical language, and the

'social conditions of knowledge production' (*Ibid* 277) Moreover, several factors have contributed to critical re-examination of biomedical or disease model by the medical world itself for the past two decades. The factors as pointed out by Leon Eisenberg include intolerable costs (either to individuals or to governments), inaccessibility of medical care because of poor distribution by locality and specialty, and dissatisfaction with the 'quality' of the medical encounter when it takes place, etc (cited in Lock 1989)

Within this conceptual framework, this paper attempts to understand sickness through a study of malaria in India Sickness identification and prolongation of sickness (longer duration of sickness) are major concerns for policy makers. However, the whole discourse of preventive and curative models fixes the blame on the individuals and prescribes several health-education and behaviour-change programmes as remedies, instead of understanding and addressing the social conditions of disease production. Pursuing this line of argument, a few pertinent questions are raised in order to understand the recurring human suffering due to malaria and subsequent interventions. The narratives are explored in terms of semantics in the local context. What are the specific human factors that social scientific research highlights or undermines as the processes in the identification of malaria, its causes and subsequent treatment patterns?

Malaria in India: An Historical Assessment

It is estimated that malaria affects 300-500 million people and results in more than one million deaths per year worldwide (McCarthy *et al* 2000) The UNO statistics reveal that, aside AIDS, malaria is the only other disease that has been steadily spreading in the 1980s and 1990s. In India, there were 2,019,066 reported incidences of malaria and 946 malarial deaths in the year 2000. According to WHO estimates, the numbers exceed well over the reported cases, and that the actual numbers are around 15 million and 20,000 respectively (see http://www.who.org)

The overall malaria situation in India remained unchanged until the 1940s, prior to the introduction of Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) DDT was first imported into India for military purposes. In 1945, following the first major large-scale trial of DDT application along the Tennessee River (USA), it was made available to the Bombay Malaria Organisation in September 1945 for field trials in the rural areas of Dharwar and Kanara districts (now in the State of Karnataka). This had proved to be remarkably successful in the project areas (cited in Kamat 2000). Based on these results, the Government of India had launched the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) in 1953 with the support

of WHO, USAID and the Rockefeller Foundation, during which time there was an estimated annual incidence of 75 million cases of malaria and annual incidence of 80,000 deaths. Within five years of the launching of NMCP, the incidence of malaria had drastically dropped from 75 million cases to 2 million cases. With the exuberant confidence over its success achieved in malaria control, the government renamed NMCP as NMEP (National Malaria Eradication Programme) in 1958, and implemented it as one of the vertical programmes in the country. By the year 1964, it was claimed that malaria was eradicated from 88 percent of the area and the remaining 12 percent could have been contained if the supply of DDT was maintained as scheduled 4 It has been pointed out that, starting with the shortages of DDT and malaria larvicidal oil, inadequate infrastructure in general and health services in particular hampered surveillance and vigilance Inadequate staff in health centres and technical problems contributed to the rise in malarial cases (Sharma and Mehrotra 1986, Wessen 1986) Some studies fixed the blame on the movement of population (particularly rural migrant labour due to distress conditions), increased water-intensive cropping, labour habitats near construction sites and mining areas, delayed or piecemeal financial sanction to NMEP in certain states, and diverting basic health workers for other health programmes (see Rajagopalan et al 1986)

The annual number of cases rose again to over half a million in 1970 The Government of India acknowledged the gravity of the situation and abandoned the eradication strategy in favour of a strategy known as Modified Plan of Operation (MPO) (implemented in 1977) which emphasised control and containment (Sharma and Mehrotra 1986) In fact, since 1979, the incidence of malaria has shown no marked change in India and that the incidence of plasmodium falciparum has increased from 20 percent in 1965 to 50 percent in 2000 (Sharma 2003 514) By the year 2000, when the situation was diagnosed as beyond control (leave alone eradication), the Government of India changed its nomenclature from NMEP to NAMP (National Anti-Malaria Programme) 5 Again in December 2003, NAMP was changed to VBDCP (Vector Borne Disease Control Programme) This shift from NMCP to NMEP to NAMP to VBDCP reflected not only a shift in the approach to the problem, but also the way it undermined the role of human beings in creating new epidemiological trends. This also brings to the fore the intensity of the communities' suffering and high incidence of mortality and morbidity due to malaria, more particularly plasmodium falciparum 6

In a nutshell, India continues to experience malaria epidemic in different parts of the country every year. The gravity of the problem is emphasised by the fact that the Government of India has identified

several districts in each state as 'malaria endemic regions' and decided as a policy to treat all febrile illnesses with anti-malarials as part of presumptive treatment. This, however, showed how bodies are being viewed or attended to in suppressing the apparent symptoms rather than addressing the persons, communities and their suffering in context. As Robert H. Black has argued

How often one reads or hears that malaria eradication failed because the vectors became resistant to insecticides and the parasites resistant to chloroquine. This is a nice 'scientific explanation' that appeals to hard scientists whereas the main reasons for failure have to be sought in the soft sciences—human behaviour, politics, economics (cited in Wessen 1986 iii)

Malaria: The Processes of Prognosis

It is recognised that, since malaria is a moving target, the control approaches/programmes to control it must constantly adapt to the changing patterns of epidemiology over the times (Shivlal et al 1998) Recognising the high incidence and the changing epidemiological pattern of malaria, the NAMP issued directives and guidelines by which district health administration should predict and detect local malaria epidemics to initiate adequate control measures. However, the district health administration was provided neither the authority nor the competence to adapt to the locally acceptable methods of detection and treatment.

Given the iniquitous social structure, caste hierarchy and economic disparities, on the one hand, and the high incidence of malaria and its geographical spread, on the other, it has not been possible to provide facilities for clinical diagnosis of malaria for majority of the affected persons Moreover, technically it has been acknowledged that there are difficulties in developing a clinical definition of malaria, because of the wide variety of symptoms that occur as well as the increase in asymptomatic cases (for example, either severe headache or knee pain as in Surat district) in different parts of the country Thus, to a large extent, malaria is being diagnosed based on physician's experience (particularly of those in private practice) Majority (68 percent) of the affected persons consult private practitioners, who would normally not recommend clinical diagnosis because of its high cost (Prasad 2000) Furthermore, where local governments commissioned active surveillance during epidemics, it revealed a large number of undetected malarial cases. In a study on malaria epidemic in Mumbai, Vinay Kamat reports that 'surveillance system actually picked up those fever and malaria cases that would have been left undiagnosed, untreated or most likely to be treated by a private practitioner' (2000 146)

The prognosis of malaria, starting from collection of blood slides, efficient screening, appropriate skills of lab technicians, scheduled delivery of reports to the affected persons, follow-up of treatment, reputation of government run health centres, non-specified treatment provided by unregulated private sector etc., is quite complex. For instance, in order to detect malaria epidemics, the NAMP directs district health administration to find out if the increase in fever-rate reaches one-third or more of new OPD cases in dispensaries, primary health centres or hospitals during the current month, or rely on field-staff communication about the increase in fever cases. However, neither is the field-staff communication reliable nor do most sick persons visit the government-run health centres, thus resulting in a large number of undetected malaria cases in rural India Our study (see Infra) revealed that most (78 percent) of the affected persons were labelled by the doctor as having malaria without any clinical test. This brings into focus how sickness is identified and labelled, and subsequently treated In this context, people's expression or articulation of sickness is a significant factor in terms of prognosis

People use various analogies and metaphors to describe and explain sickness. The terms used by laypersons to explain sickness often do not coincide with those used in the biomedical parlance and, hence, the scope for misunderstanding between sufferers and healthcare providers At times, both may be using the same term for indicating different things and, at others, both use different terms to mean the same thing For instance, when people say they are affected with 'malaria', they may not mean the same thing as medical professionals do, though both use the same word 8 It may be noted that less than one-third of the respondents indicated 'malaria' as one of the three most serious sicknesses in their village However, placing malaria in the matrix of serious ailments has two main limitations First, 'seriousness' has to be defined and, secondly, not all those who have reported knowledge about malaria necessarily mean it as 'clinical malaria' Several research studies have pointed out that a key step in studying treatment-seeking with respect to malaria is to identify local disease categories or illness terms that correspond to malaria (see McCombie 1994, Hausman 2000) and then devise appropriate policies and interventions

Methodology

The data for this study was part of a larger multi-disciplinary research project sponsored by the Government of India (involving entomologists,

epidemiologists, social scientists and health policy makers) with the aim to develop a strategy for malaria control and prevention. The study was conducted over a period of five years (1995-2000) in Surat district in Gujarat. During this project period, three interventions—Insecticide Treated Mosquito Nets (ITMN), Indoor Residual Spray (IRS), and Early Detection and Prompt Treatment (EDPT)—were tested out in forty-two villages in each zone (coastal, plains and hilly)⁹ covering altogether 126 villages

Social science component in the larger project had three major objectives (i) to carry out fieldwork through participant observation method and collect data on perceptions of illness and health, particularly on beliefs and practices surrounding treatment of fever, (ii) to prepare reports setting out the findings of the field work and discussing the implications for introducing modern scientific knowledge about the transmission and treatment of malaria to the local population studied, and (iii) to advise on the setting up of training programmes for health workers in rural areas and health promotion and training programmes in urban areas incorporating research gathered during field work Accordingly, we selected three villages, one intervention village each from three different ecological zones—Karanj in the coastal, Sathvav in the plains and Khogalgam in the hilly zones—for intensive study These villages were chosen primarily keeping in mind the needs of interventions proposed by the MCRP

The research team comprising one principal investigator and one research assistant spent about six months in each village. Participant observation was used to understand people's perceptions on diseases in general and malaria in particular. Tools of data collection included unstructured interviews, group discussions, case studies and discussion with key informants. After one year, two more villages in each zone were subjected to intensive study for further clarity. The findings of these nine villages were validated through a structured questionnaire in eleven villages in each zone, thus covering 976 households (15% of the total households) in thirty-three villages. Similar methodology was used in 'non-intervention villages' (1,704 households) in order to compare the findings of 'intervention villages' (see Lobo et al. 1998 and 2000)

'Lay' Perceptions of Malaria: View from the Field

Health was something that one 'possesses' normally in the course of life, whereas sickness can be avoided by eating appropriate food as per the season, by good action, by warding off evil, and by propitiating the appropriate deities. There are different types of sickness, one associated

with physical body (rising temperature, injury through accidents, etc.), the cause of which is perceived as internal, and the other, with non-physical activities (bad actions, fevers due to external agents, etc.), the cause of which is external. It is important to understand this overall attitude before various concepts and perceptions about sickness and treatment are discussed from the field data.

In Surat district, bimari and mandgi are the local terms used for sickness. If a person is sick for short duration, 10 he/she denotes it as bimari, while it becomes mandgi if it is for a longer duration Bimari includes cold, cough, fever, diarrhoea, etc., while mandgi includes jaundice, malaria, typhoid, etc. The term rog is used to indicate chronic sickness like TB, cancer, asthma, paralysis, arthritis, skin diseases, etc. The main criteria used to indicate rog was 'continuous attention' required, sicknesses that cannot be easily cured, and fatality, economic cost and abnormal time it demands. The duration of sickness also, in fact, distinguishes these three concepts of sickness—bimari, mandgi and rog Malaria. It is bimari for some, while it is mandgi for others, depending upon their perceived sickness, intensity of pain, frequency of sickness etc. The reference group is always their own family members or kin group who were affected with intense sickness.

In the instance of malaria, another common term used by the communities to describe their sickness was tav in Gujarati and jora in tribal (Gamits) dialects meaning fever. The words tav and jora originate from the Sanskrit words tapa and jwara meaning fever. The symptoms of tav were further elaborated as body temperature, internal heat/pain in the body (kadtar tav/dukhavo), 'steam comes out from the body' (sharir dhagu dhagu thaye), uneasiness (jeev ukalat), acute 'tearing' pain in limbs (hath pag fatva made), loosening of the body (sharir dhilu dhilu lage), severe headache (mathu fati jatu hoi tem bahuj dukhava lage) etc Ashakti was another term used to describe their sickness, implying their condition of sickness rather than a label for the sickness. These terms or narratives not only indicated physical abnormalities but also social problems or complications in day-to-day life

Furthermore, the biomedical term 'malaria' is being understood in a varied sense in the study area. The word tav (fever) opens the window for understanding specific pain affliction and suffering expressed through different semantics. If a person said he/she was afflicted with zeri (poison) tav, it may indicate the intensity of fever in terms of high temperature, pain, etc or that somebody with envy/jealousy may have performed witchcraft on him/her. Similarly, communities use the words simple malaria (sado malaria) and poisonous malaria (zeri malaria). Sado malaria, to a large extent, indicated physical pain, whereas zeri malaria.

meant several things—like malaria afflictions due to bad intentions or punishment for some wrongdoing etc. The local medical practitioners use the terms zeri tav and zeri malaria to refer to plasmodium falciparum and other tavs to refer to plasmodium vivex. However, it may not be possible to make these simplistic distinctions in terms of semantics used without understanding the complex situation the people are describing. This was quite evident, say for instance, about their knowledge of malaria. Even in the non-trial villages, the study revealed that 97 percent of the 1,704 households claimed to know malaria. However, only three-fourth of those who claimed to know malaria could describe the cause (that is, the malaria-mosquito link) and symptoms of malaria as per the generally accepted clinical knowledge. Similarly, there were varied semantics used which indicated specific pain in terms of frequency, body sites, cause, seasons etc.

Frequency Fevers related with frequency of occurrence like alternate day fever (antario tav or ekantario tav), fever occurring in turns on the same day (varino tav, varkiliya jora), fever occurring daily (rojiyo tav), fever occurring fortnightly (mudati tav), fever occurring every fourth day (chouthiyo tav)

Fevers/pain on body sites Few respondents described stomach pain (petmadukhavano tav, khad jora), saying 'I felt something was moving in my stomach, I felt like vomiting, also had slight cold and fever' Other descriptions included pain in the head (ardha mathanu tav, adhiheeno jora), fever due to ache in the waist (kamar dukhavano tav), fever resulting from cold and shivering (thadiyo tav, kapro tav, kapro jora), fever from cold (sardino tav), fever from cough, (khansino tav), fever with shivering (hihee jora, also thandino tav), body feels torn apart, knee pain, feeling a compulsion to hold the limbs together and desire for sleeping (tutino tav) Haddino tav is the fever in the bones followed by a feeling of lethargy

Fevers linked to causes like tiredness (thakno tav), big and small rashes (fullino tav, chandano tav, pikhala jora), hot winds (loono tav, garmiwalo tav), and bad air (bura pavan)—which referred to unnatural forces (baharni asar)

Season Fevers occurring in different seasons—monsoon, winter and summer—were indicated by barasati tav, thandino tav and garmino tav

Across the district, different social groups used various semantics for expressing similar pain/suffering. For instance, antario tav was used in multi-caste villages in the coastal zone, varino tav, in the plains (both tribe and caste villages), and varkiliya jora, in the tribal hilly zone Similarly, some fevers have different names even within the same village, like antario tav, which is same as ekantario tav (fever that comes

on alternate days) Another example is zeri tav (poisonous fever) and magazno tav (cerebral fever) which are used synonymously

Fluidity of tav As far as the consequences of fevers are concerned, there are some fevers which turn into more serious diseases/sickness. For instance, zino tav (simple fever), followed by an uneasy feeling in the stomach, resulting in moto tav (intense fever). This intense fever causes rise in the proportion of blood in the body and may lead to malaria (biomedical term) or jaundice or paralysis.

The extent to which these local disease categories represent true malaria is variable. In principle, broad terms that can be translated as 'fever' should incorporate most cases of malaria, though they include other diseases as well. For instance, certain other terms like *uthal pathal* (upsets), *gabhraman* (fear), *peeda* (pain), *ashakti* (weakness or fragility), *bechani* (uneasiness), *kam karvanu man na thai* (lethargy) and *khavanu man nathi lage* (loss of appetite) were expressions used along with *tav* (fever) to describe their suffering/symptoms. These semantics, emanating from their bodily experiences, to describe their pain and sickness have no meaning in a different context. Moreover, these semantics, expressed to indicate their pain in terms of 'sickness in itself' and 'symptoms', do not get acceptance because the words used neither coincide with the biomedical term malaria nor the sequence of 'signs'. The cases described below narrate the complexity of the sickness situation and treatment patterns.

Case 1

Dhansukhbhai Gamit, an agricultural labourer aged 32 years, who lived in the village Kosambiya, had fever When he felt sick, he did not even disclose this to his family members for the first two days, and it was also the period when sugarcane-cutting operation was at its peak. When it became unbearable, he revealed it to his family members and on the advice of his grandfather (who has knowledge on herbs/roots, that is, jadimudi), Dhansukhbhai consumed crushed juice of neem bark for two days. When the fever did not subside, he went to Dr Kiritbhai, a private doctor in Valod, at a distance of 4 km from the village. When the doctor enquired and asked to narrate the symptoms, he revealed saying that he had sado tav (simple fever) and ashakti (weakness), that he was not able to eat and often felt thirsty, and that he did not feel like working. The doctor did not tell him what he was suffering from, but he gave antibiotics and paracetamols for three days along with an injection. After two days, when the temperature got aggravated, he went to Dr Pawar in Valod, another private doctor On enquiry, he revealed the same symptoms, but emphasised on weakness, for which Dr Pawar asked him to take an injection, and prescribed para-

cetamols and multivitamin tablets Within a day, the situation became worse, and he was forced to get admitted in a government-run community health centre. The blood-slide examination revealed that he was suffering from malaria, and was treated accordingly.

Upon interviewing, both the private practitioners said that it was not possible for them to send large number of poor sick persons for blood-slide examination, which is expensive in private laboratories. They also feared that the poor sick would never return to them for consultation because of the expensive treatment. When Dhansukhbhai Gamit was asked as to why he had not consulted the government-run health centre at first instance, he and his family members expressed apprehensions about the treatment available there. They also wanted to consult private doctors to recover quickly so that he did not lose wages, as he is the main breadwinner.

Case 2

Savitaben Rathod, aged 35 years, is an agricultural labourer, who also works as 'helper' in domestic work in Timberva village. When she was not well, she waited for a day and bought four tablets from a local shop (ganchi ni dukan) and consumed them in the next two days. On the fourth day, as the symptoms persisted, she consulted Dr Chandubhai, a private doctor at Mohini, which is 2 km from the village. When the doctor enquired about the symptoms, Savitaben said that she had fever (tav) along with limb ache (hath pakh phate), fear (gabhraman) and weakness (ashakti lage) On hearing the symptoms, he gave an injection and prescribed tablets for two days symptomatically She was curious to know about the diagnosis, but the doctor did not say anything She consulted the doctor thrice, every alternate day, that is, for five days, and took three injections but took the tablets only for the first two days. Her perception was that if she takes more tablets, the body gets hot, hence, she did not consume all the tablets, though she spent Rs 20 for each visit to the doctor. The doctor advised her to take 'cold food' (particularly milk), but she did not, as her family could not afford it. The body temperature was reduced, but her back pain, cough, fear and weakness persisted. After three days, she became seriously unwell and all the symptoms along with the fever aggravated She went to another private doctor, who immediately asked her to get admitted in Sardar Trust Hospital, but when they approached, it was beyond their ability to bear the cost of treatment. She was taken to a government hospital and was diagnosed as having malaria and treated for the same

In this case, discussion with the private doctor revealed that the symptoms described by her did not indicate malaria. Savitaben went on expressing fear and weakness as major symptoms because of the huge indebtedness they had ended up due to crop loss in the previous year as well as the unanticipated death of a milch cow, which provided significant income to meet household expenses on day-to-day basis.

These two cases revealed the anxiety with which both the sufferers and healthcare providers are negotiating sickness situations. The method of identification of sickness becomes much more problematic because the affected persons are narrating the sickness in its specificity, whereas the healthcare providers are looking for clinical translation of symptoms into signs without taking into account the social circumstances. Byron Good (1977) showed through his study in Iran that 'heart distress' was used sometimes to name an illness, sometimes as a symptom, sometimes as a cause of other illnesses. Heart distress in Iran's context meant worry about poverty, nerve distress, sadness, anxiety, anger-all of these can be caused or exacerbated by living in poverty Similarly, in the explanation of 'sinking heart' (kamjori) by the Punjabis living in Bradford, Inga-Britt Krause (1989) says that, illness complex was conceptualised as a set of physical signs, emotional sensations, and feelings and social circumstances which once triggered off tend to be perpetuated and experienced again and again Narrating similar usage of semantics of pain, Judy Pugh (1991) remarks that pain behaviour in India incorporates a range of styles appropriate for specific categories of persons, situations and types of pain Thus, the medical way of thinking focuses exclusively on physical abnormalities ignoring the sufferer and her/his attributes as human persons

Two Perceptions of Malaria: A Sociological Analysis

My purpose here is neither to come up with an inventory of local illness semantics nor justify it, but to highlight two contrasting worldviews, where each group is operating in its own frame of reference and hence unable to negotiate sickness situations. As Sanjyot Pai (2003) points out, the physician and the patient experience sickness in significantly different ways. Therefore, sickness, in effect, represents two distinct realities rather than representing a shared 'reality' between them. A shared world of meaning between the healthcare providers and healthcare receivers largely does not exist.

Despite their limited economic, political and social resources, including access to education, health and affordability to modern medical practitioners, communities have enormous trust in and expectations of the modern system of medicine. One could find communities grappling with their own sickness- and suffering-narratives, as they are unable to reach out to the realm of modern institutions and its practitioners. Instead of understanding the struggle and transition of the communities to negotiate space for quality life, one finds a major discourse emanating from both medical and non-medical domains undermining people's

ability to comprehend sickness situations. Consequently, biomedical as well as social scientific literature to some extent advocates providing health education in order to set free the communities from their ignorance.

Technically speaking, surveillance, detection and prompt treatment are considered as crucial factors in not only reducing large number of malaria cases, but also in preventing potential community carriers of parasites (Hausman 2000) As policy makers also admit, only when communities participate in large numbers in the anti-malarial programmes designed by the government, the detection of cases is possible With the lead role provided by international funding agencies in advancing the rhetoric of 'community participation' in all the development programmes, NMEP or NAMP in India can hardly be an exception to it There is little evidence if one were to examine healthcare policies and its implementation to find locally acceptable methods of identification of malaria In other words, community perceptions and the ways and means of negotiating suffering, whether it is malaria or any other disease situation, has never been uncovered. The recurrent incidence of malaria and other fevers initiate a process of rationalisation of what comes to be constituted as 'endemic'

The underlying reasons for the failure or non-compliance by the malaria-affected persons need to be understood, rather than letting loose a victim-blaming process. The commonest forms of evading social responsibility is to identify 'certain group character'-'defaulter', in the case of Tubereulosis, 'non-compliant', in the case of malaria, and 'uncooperative', in the case of leprosy In addition, specified group of peoplemigrants, rural women, illiterates, etc-have been identified as community carriers of malaria parasite Several studies have pointed out that the prominent social response that emerges during epidemics is the shifting of responsibility and blame to the other (see Ghosh and Coutinho 2000, Prasad 2000) On the one hand, sufferers, particularly women and the aged, have hardly any option but to resort to available healing processes within the community (elders of the family/kin, traditional healers-herbalists, faith healers, etc), on the other hand, treatment providers and health administrators blame the people in terms of their beliefs, superstitions and value systems

Linear Causation by Major Cause

Similar to sickness identification, causes of sickness also indicate differential pattern between medical and lay narratives. However, a deeper understanding of these narratives reveals that persons with sick-

ness and their families are confronted with several sickness dichotomies prior to their response to sickness. Apart from mosquitoes as a cause of malaria, getting drenched in rain, physical work for long hours, exhaustion, tiredness, working under hot sun, bad air, bad weather, baharniasar, ¹³ eating certain types of food like cucumber, custard apple, stale food, etc are some of the 'causes' of malaria/local fevers as revealed in this study

A young person (a tribal *Chodry*, who is educated up to primary level and holds a private job) with fever said 'since last week the weather was moist due to rain. Hence, there was shivering, blocked nose, body ache and headache, which all culminated into *tav* gripping me. Later the doctor told me that it is malaria'

In another case, a tribal male (aged 32 years) described how his fever began. After completing his weeding work in the field, as he was returning home, he felt *chakkar* (giddiness) on the way. His body started paining and he began feeling cold. By the time he reached his home, he was gripped by the fever. It began to rise further. He said, some fevers/malaria are accidental/coincidental after getting tired or exhausted working under the sun, or due to *bura pavan* (bad air)

The causes of malaria narrated in all the study villages are very dissimilar Some of the causes are sheer coincidental such as getting wet in the rain However, the communities' perceptions on the causes of malaria could be classified thus physical work (hard work), bio-chemical (change in water), supernatural (sorcery), psychological (tension), seasonal (getting wet in rain), contagious (close contact with malaria patients), loss of crop or any misfortune (anxiety) etc. In this multiple causative logic, one major dichotomy that arises is between natural (kudrath) and unnatural (baharni) causes of malaria This dichotomy is crucial or a liminal phase of sickness. One starts introspecting her/his own life-world and social events that take place during that particular period of sickness In their multi-causal analysis, baharni asar as a cause cannot be ruled out in any sickness. However, medical aetiology denotes mosquitoes as the only causative factor and dismisses other factors as having no relevance in the process of treatment. This not only widens the critical gap between groups of sickness sufferers and healthcare providers, but also results in the under-diagnosis of malaria cases evident in the study area Naming a specific cause for a disease is not sufficient. It is essential to find a pattern of events that makes the patient to become vulnerable to specific causes of disease(s)

It is also reported that most deaths due to malaria remained unreported in different parts of India (see Rana and Johnson 2003) Apart from causing mortality, malaria gravely weakens many of its affected

persons, making them susceptible to other life-threatening illnesses such as pneumonia, anaemia, or dysentery. As Watts Sheldon (1999) notes, in addition to its role as a killer and weakener, malaria was an element in that vicious circle which makes the poor *malarious* and the malarious *poor*. In fact, a single set of signs can designate more than one sickness and social forces help determine which group of people get which sicknesses. As Vijay Kumar Yadavendu points out, 'The taking of a purely medical history individuates the patient, however, the disease or injury from which the patient is suffering, is received as part of a collective experience in a particular historical, cultural and social setting. These latter circumstances are as much a part of the cause, and should be part of the treatment as purely medical facts' (2001–2787). This is also ironic since the problems of ill health and disease in the Third World countries is entirely of a different order, located in hunger, poverty and infection, all of which have social bases.

Interventions and Specific Groups

Anti-malarial programmes also need to identify specific groups and devise appropriate interventions rather than offer generalised services A special focus is required for all the tribal communities across the country, as malaria takes a high toll on these communities. Although tribal communities account for 8 percent of the total Indian population, it contributes to 30 percent of the total reported cases of malaria and 50 percent of malarial deaths (ICMR 2004) Similarly, other specific groups. such as women, children and the aged, need to be focused For instance, though research indicates that, in terms of prevalence and incidences of malaria, men outnumber women m the country (approximately 1 39 to 1), women disproportionately bear the economic burden of disease and illness. When members of the family fall ill, there is labour substitution to maintain the income and functions of the family unit, and the burden of labour substitution tends to fall disproportionately on women Maternal health is also critical for infant health. Malaria is the leading cause of anaemia and low birth-weight babies. Thus, malaria is also a cause of infant mortality and threatens life-long morbidity Malaria prevention among children also needs to be a priority since it is one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity for children under the age of five

Migrants form another category of people that requires a great deal of attention. In South Gujarat, there is surveillance on migrants. For instance, in Surat city, migrants need to seek special permission from the municipal authorities both before and after arrival into the city, as the

migrants are the suspected carriers of protozoa. However, the surveillance is restricted to identifying actual malaria cases and sending back the malaria affected migrants to their respective home states, rather than to providing treatment. Instead of targeting the migrants, they need to be provided with special facilities in accessing health services As provisions of public health infrastructure in terms of access to healthcare. safe drinking water and sanitation have collapsed, the migrants, rural poor and urban poor are increasingly becoming vulnerable to the malarial fevers In addition to this, caste issue continues to plague the malaria control programme and health system in general In rural areas, the continuing stigma of untouchability remains painfully obvious and detrimental to the health and livelihood of the lower castes Additionally. the impoverished state of many of these castes only compounds this problem of access and capabilities Ill health is not a problem by itself, it is rather a symptom of deeper socioeconomic injustice. As Sheila Zubrigg (2001) avers, ill health can be interpreted as a form of institutionalised violence in society

Discussion

It is evident from the study that an analysis of disease/health that isolates the individual from her/his social environment not only fails to identify sickness as well as address contributing and causative factors, but implicitly accedes to the continuation of power arrangements in social relations. The problem identified with description or narration of local illness categories is its failure to link these categories to the larger systems of domination that often influence or even generate them (Farmer 1988)

It is the state and civil society groups, which lacked commitment to provide basic needs, particularly public health facilities and 'education', 14 to the iural communities for the last five decades, which created a huge gap between healthcare providers and receivers. Instead of empathising with the struggling communities and their suffering, one finds 'victim-blaming' as a predominant agenda taken up by the healthcare bureaucracy and policy makers. State and civil society groups, which failed to create conditions for self-realisation of individual capabilities, do not hesitate to put the blame on the dependency syndrome of the people. The findings from the malaria-affected persons revealed that communities have lot more expectations from the modern medical institutions, which are not able to live up to the aspirations of the larger masses. Hence, understanding sickness from the 'sufferers' point of view

holds the key to any intervention in the area of tropical diseases. As Arthur Kleinman et al. rightly observe

Social suffering brings into a single space an assemblage of human problems that have their origins and consequences in the devastating injuries that social force can inflict on human experience. Social suffering results from what political, economic and institutional power does to people and reciprocally, from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems (2001 ix)

People have given fifty different local names for fever It will be useful to put these fevers into categories of malaria and malaria-like fevers, so that policy makers do not miss out the malaria cases just because they do not use the same nomenclature for an illness Aetiology, however, cannot be different There may be hundred reasons for getting fever, but malaria is transmitted through mosquitoes Sometimes when people describe malaria and malaria-like fever as baharni asar and its aetiology as an evil force (through dakan) in the form of an insect, what it means is the same This is simply because the biomedical scientists view it as a parasite, while communities view it as an insect, it is only a difference in language

Given the intense suffering due to malaria, V P Sharma (2003 514) boldly suggests that higher levels of funding, cooperation, effective health and malaria education, though necessary and important, offer only a part of the solution to malaria These approaches fail to address the greater socioeconomic concerns that, if corrected, would revolutionise health in the country There should be access to medical services for anyone in medical need (Daniel 1985) However, specific non-medical features of individuals—their caste, gender, and politico-economic location—actually determine whether or not they have access to healthcare

Notes

This is a revised version of the paper 'Conceptualising Health' A Study of Malaria in Gujajrat' presented at the seminar on 'Health and Society Issues and Concerns' organised by the Department of Sociology, Goa University on 5-6 March 2003. I am thankful to the organisers of the Seminar for the invitation. I am grateful to the anonymous referee for her/his useful comments and suggestions that helped me revise the paper substantively.

Rene Descartes provided a highly influential conceptualisation of the mind/body/ senses relationship His formula 'cogito, ergo sum' ('I think, therefore I am') was linked at one level to a complete devaluation of all the body's senses Such an

- approach exposes the western philosophy's inability to deal comprehensively or consistently with the human body (cf Mellor and Shilling 1997 6)
- 2 Medicine may be efficacious, it may nevertheless have little or no positive effect, as is evident in the case of tropical and other diseases in India
- 3 Narratives are not individual accounts, but collective social accounts of the struggling communities
- 4 The factors that contributed to the short supply of DDT were the outbreaks of hostilities with Pakistan and a breakdown in production at the Alwayne factory
- 5 This change in nomenclature was effected due to the advice by the World Bank as part of the Enhanced Malaria Control Project (EMCP) in fifteen states in India
- 6 Plasmodium falciparum (PF) is more severe and complicated compared with Plasmodium vivex (PV) that was common in India till 1980s
- Malaria is a parasitic disease spread by the bite of Anopheles mosquito which is active between dusk and dawn Malarial symptoms can occur eight days after an infected bite. The principal symptoms are fever, malaise, headache, chills and sweats, but it can present itself as a respiratory or gastrointestinal illness, too
- 8 The research projects and intervention programmes on malaria implemented by the government through different funding agencies also influenced people to largely adapt the biomedical or English terms whether they mean same thing or not
- 9 The geographical zones of Surat district are also socio-cultural zones. Hilly zone, a dry region was inhabited by the tribes (Chodrys and Gamits), caste groups (Koli Patels, Ahirs, Desai, Kaduva Patidars, Prajapatis, Chamars, Parmars and Halpatis) were predominant in the irrigated coastal zone, and the plains zone (both dry and irrigated) comprised villages inhabited by both castes and tribes. Surat district was chosen for trial research not only because of its malaria endemicity, but also due to its geographical and socio-cultural spread, so that generalisations made from the trial zones would have broader relevance for the entire country
- 10 'Short-' and 'long-duration' are relatively used, as what is short or long depends on the type of sickness, its conceived ranking in the family and community, age of the person affected, the circumstances under which the sickness occurs, etc Broadly, short duration may be one to five days, and long duration may be three days and more
- 11 Wherever the biomedical term malaria is used, it also includes local fevers which may or may not correspond to malaria
- 12 Non-trial areas were those villages where there was no intervention by the Malaria Control Research Project Three interventions (namely, ITMNs, IRS, and EDPT) in trial areas required scores of official visits, distribution of material things, and external dissemination of information on malaria, which largely influenced people's ideas about malaria
- 13 Baharnisar meaning malevolent social relations which go beyond witchcraft and sorcery Both intentional and unintentional acts of 'abnormal' persons, ancestors, or unnatural forces may strike a person to make her/him sick. It is observed that beliefs about different forms of malevolent social relations are prevalent in all societies and tribals are no exception. Furthermore, modern health services have been well accepted by the tribals and they are craving for efficient delivery of these services.
- 14 Here, education does not mean adult literacy or health education/awareness, but formal education

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Sanskritisation Revisited

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This paper discusses the origin, development and continuing relevance of MN Srinivas' concept and analysis of sanskritisation. It points out how it is a mistake to limit the use of the concept to emulation of the culture of higher castes by lower castes for upward mobility in caste hierarchy. In reality, as Srinivas himself clarified, sanskritisation is a many-sided cultural process, only a part of which is connected with the caste system. The paper indicates how caste hierarchy is gradually getting dissociated from sanskritisation, and how many non-caste structures and institutions have become its powerful agents, leading to greater sanskritisation of the society as a whole, including the dalits and the adivasis.

It is well known that one of the basic contributions of M N Srinivas to the study of Indian society and culture is his concept and analysis of sanskritisation. He used the concept first in his doctoral dissertation on Coorg religion submitted to Oxford University in 1947 and published in 1952. As Srinivas himself noted later (1967, reprinted in Srinivas 2002-221), the eminent linguist and historian Suniti Kumar Chatterjee (1950) also used the term almost at the same time as Srinivas used it, but without the two scholars knowing about one another's work. This was similar to the well-known phenomenon in physical sciences of simultaneous discovery by two or more scientists without knowing one another's work.

Srinivas' concept has had a long career, culminating in its inclusion in the Oxford English dictionary (1971) This has happened because not only Srinivas but also many other scholars have written extensively about it These scholars belong to a variety of disciplines anthropology, sociology, history, political science, linguistics, Sanskrit, Indology, and others One may agree or disagree with the concept, one may misunderstand it, or one may interpret it differently, but one uses it all the same. The frequently used term 'de-sanskritisation' also presumes 'sanskritisation' The concept continues to be used extensively even now, and will, I am sure, continue to be used as long as scholars are interested in understanding Indian culture and society in space and time

As soon as we use the term sanskritisation, Sanskrit language comes to our mind Indeed several linguists such as Suniti Kumar Chatterjee,

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V. Raghavan and J F Staal have commented on this aspect of the concept. Sanskritisation and de-sanskritisation of languages have taken place throughout Indian history. In modern India, however, there has been widespread sanskritisation of all regional languages, including tribal languages, except perhaps Tamil. Use of standardised language in education, administration, print and electronic media, and other sectors of society, along with migrations from rural, including tribal, areas to urban centres, have played a major role in sanskritisation of regional languages. Rural, tribal and caste dialects have been on the way to extinction, if they have already not become so Hindi, after its recognition as an official language of India, has become highly Sanskritic. There are now innumerable Sanskrit tongue-twisters, often obscure, in bureaucratic parlance. Sanskrit words are also being used increasingly as personal names in modern times all over India, including tribal areas, except again perhaps in Tamil Nadu.

Sanskritisation is much more than a matter of language, however Since it is based on Srinivas' concept of Sanskritic Hinduism, it is, of course, concerned in a major way with religion. However, it is also concerned with many other aspects of society and culture Srinivas has described its features in great detail in many of his writings I will not, therefore, repeat them here Basically, these features are part of what is called great traditional, classical, or higher Hinduism elaborated in classical Sanskrit texts

'Sanskritisation' is a hybrid word Srinivas himself stated that it was 'an ugly term' (1956a 73, 1956b, 2002 202) and 'I myself do not like that word It is extremely awkward' (1956a 90) ¹ A question is often asked, particularly in discussions of the concept in regional languages is this word based on *Sanskrit* (name of the language) or *sānskriti* (meaning culture, civilisation)? Both Srinivas and Chatterjee based it on the former rather than the latter For both of them, the concept was inextricably linked to the religious and cultural complex found in classical Sanskrit literature. In any case, however, in scientific discourse the substantive content of a term is far more important than its etymology

To understand the basic nature of sanskritisation it is necessary to keep in mind Srinivas' original description and analysis of Sanskritic versus non-Sanskritic culture in his Coorg book. Its foundation is laid in the initial two chapters on 'The ritual idiom of Coorgs'. We find here detailed analysis of one after another item of culture concerning time, space, directions, shaving, bath, dress, lamp, stove, rice, milk, coins, salutation, music, food, ritual purity and impurity, mourning, funeral, betel leaves, areca nut, and so on. He uses three rules formulated by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, his teacher at Oxford, to decipher ritual idiom and thus

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understand the language of Coorg ritual ² He then uses this understanding in the rest of the book to describe and analyse the nature of Hindu gods, goddesses, and other sacred objects and personages, the rituals of their worship, the myths concerning them, the rites of passage, the festivals, social customs, and so on It is in this context that he puts forward his concepts of Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic Hinduism, and of sanskritisation.

Although Srinivas made a considerable number of general observations on Indian society and culture in the Coorg book, the main focus of the book remained Coorg society. In the years following its writing, he carried out intensive fieldwork in village Rampura and its neighbourhood in the former Mysore state (now in Karnataka) and also read modern anthropological and sociological literature that was beginning to appear Armed with this new knowledge, he presented his thoughts on sanskritisation more comprehensively for the first time in 'A note on sanskritisation and westernisation' he wrote for a seminar organised by Milton Singer at Poona in July 1954. Srinivas could not attend the seminar, but sent the paper for publication in Far eastern quarterly

In the meanwhile, he presented the same paper at the all India conference of anthropologists and sociologists held at Madras in November 1955. While presenting the paper he spoke at some length to introduce it. The paper, the speech and the discussion were published in the report of the conference in October 1956 (see Srinivas 1956a). In the paper he expressed his awareness of 'the complexity of the concept and its looseness' (*Ibid* 75, 1956b, 2002–202) and in the speech he expressed his dissatisfaction with the word 'sanskritisation' (1956a–90). Several leading participants in the conference, such as V. Raghavan, Irawati Karve, N.K. Bose, P.N. Prabhu and N. Dutta-Majumder, criticised the paper sharply. Since I was a participant in the conference, I could see the criticisms were quite sharp. Srinivas' reply was equally sharp.

I am afraid that in spite of the criticisms against the term sanskritisation, I shall continue to use it, and, that too, unrepentantly, because there is nothing in anything that has been said by anyone, including the President [Irawati Karve], that has convinced me that I should discard it (*Ibid* 113)

Taking advantage of the discussion at the conference, Srinivas added a long note at the end of the paper on the eve of its publication in *Far eastern quarterly* (1956b, reprinted in Srinivas 2002 200-20) He stated here that the concept was not 'perfect' (2002 219) However, he continued to use it, re-examining it continuously in view of new data and new ideas because, as he stated, 'Perfectionism is often a camouflage for

sterility' (2002 · 219) In all of his work, he believed, like E E Evans-Pritchard, his other teacher and later colleague at Oxford, in the heuristic value of an idea rather than in its truth-value (see Fuller 1998, reprinted in Srinivas 2002 702)

It is often said that the term sanskritisation is only another word for 'brahmanisation' Howevei, Srinivas clarified in all his writings on the subject, beginning with the Coorg book, that the Brahmans are not always the source or agency of sanskritisation. Often the non-Brahman castes play this role. In fact, the source of sanskritisation for a low non-Brahman caste can be another non-Brahman caste just above it in hierarchy. It is also significant that many sanyasis and sadhus are highly sanskritised in their behaviour without being Brahmans, and they are an important agent of sanskritisation. Even an Untouchable can be highly sanskritised. The reason is that the source of sanskritisation may not be any caste at all, it can even be impersonal

Incomplete reading of Srinivas' writings has often led to an impression that sanskritisation is essentially a process of emulation of the culture of upper castes by lower castes for upward mobility in the ritual hierarchy of castes. Many textbooks of sociology and social anthropology describe it this way. Surely, this process of emulation exists and is very important. Srinivas himself has analysed it at great length, to such an extent that some of his statements have contributed to this limited interpretation of the concept. However, it would be a mistake to view it as confined to and limited by the caste order. In fact, it is much wider and quite profound in application. Even in his Coorg book, he often states that sanskritisation of tribal and other outlying groups leads to their inclusion in the Hindu society. In a subsequent paper he states:

Sanskritisation is not confined to any single part of the country, but is wide-spread in the subcontinent, including remote and forested regions. It affected a wide variety of groups, both within the Hindu fold and others outside it. It was even carried to neighbouring countries such as Ceylon, Indonesia, and Tibet (1967, reprinted in 2002 221)

In this context, it is necessary to keep in view what I said earlier about Srinivas' analysis of the ritual idiom of Coorgs, how he used this analysis in understanding their pantheon, rituals, myths, theological ideas and values, festivals, customs and ceremonies, all leading to postulation of the concepts of Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic Hinduism. In other words, we have to think of the general nature of Hinduism, only a part of which is linked with the caste order. That is why Srinivas clarified, 'To describe the social changes occurring in modern India in terms of

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sanskritisation and westernisation is to describe it primarily in *cultural*, not structural, terms (1956a 90, 1956b, reprinted in 2002 212, emphasis added) Furthermore, 'Sanskritisation is a profound and many-sided *cultural* process, only a part of which has structural relevance' (1967, reprinted in 2002 222, emphasis added) In other words, its link with the caste order is only a part of the whole Srinivas stated, 'Sanskritisation.. means also the spread of certain values which are not directly connected with the caste system' (1956a 93)

One of the major changes in the caste system in modern India is gradual decline in the concern for ritual hierarchy of castes. This change is accompanied by gradual disassociation of sanskritisation from caste. It does not mean, however, that this disassociation is complete, or that the process of sanskritisation itself is on the decline. On the contrary, it is becoming increasingly important though in different ways.

For quite some time, non-caste and even anti-caste Sanskritic structures and institutions have been multiplying, and each of them has been diversifying its activities and promoting itself in many novel ways Sects are one such structure, and that too representing a higher level of Sanskritic culture Older sects such as those founded by Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhyacharya, Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya, Basayanna, and Ramananda, and relatively recent sects such as Swaminarayana have been growing in terms of followers, wealth, temples, monasteries, and diversification of activities. Simultaneously, there is growing evidence from various parts of the country that many new sects, usually small and localised, have been emerging all over the country. A view prevalent for a long time that sects are castes in the making, if they have already not become so, has come in the way of recognising them as one of the important non-caste structures and understanding their role not just in religion but also in economy, polity, and society at large. Intensive investigations in every part of the country are required to get a comprehensive view of the sectarian situation

Another sanskritising agency is a large number of god-men (babas, bapus, gurus, swamis, acharyas, maharajs) and god-women (mas, mais, matas) that have emerged in recent times. Some of them operate almost all over the country and in many countries abroad, such as Satya Sai Baba, Asharam Bapu, Morari Bapu, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Mata Amritanandmayi, to name only a few Every one of them has one or more ashrams and a large number of followers, including the rich, the high and the mighty. Each gives discourses to large congregations and on television. There are also many lesser god-men and -women whose operations are confined to small and local groups. It is difficult to say how many of these god-men and -women will become founders of new

sects When such men and women pass away, their followers try to perpetuate their legacy by forming new sectarian organisations, with varying success. The Swadhyaya movement founded by Pandurang Athavale Shastri in western India a few decades ago is an interesting example. After his death, it is facing serious problems of perpetuating its original aims. Tensions and conflicts have emerged between vested interests, and many followers have deserted it.

Temples have always been a powerful agent of sanskritisation. In modern India, on the one hand, there is phenomenal increase in pilgrim traffic to, and consequently wealth of, large temples such as those in Tirupati, Madurai, Mathura, Kashi, Jagannath Puri, Nathadwara, Badrinath, Kedarnath and Vaishnodevi. On the other hand, new temples, small and large, are multiplying in every village, town and metropolis. It is remarkable how a little sacred spot made of a rough hewn stone, sometimes a heap of such stones, grows into a full-fledged temple in a short time every where in the country, not just in villages but even in large cities, and every stage in its growth is marked by a higher level of sanskritisation. All sects, temples and monasteries have important social, economic and political ramifications which need to be probed. There should be a national survey of temples, and sociologists and social anthropologists should work out the density of temples and of templegoing population in every part of the country.

Religious books, periodicals and newspapers have become powerful agents of sanskritisation among all castes, including the dalits and adivasis Every newspaper in regional languages issues a supplement on religion at least once a week. The religious periodicals are so popular that the print-run of some of them is in tens of thousands, and their subscription rates are very low. Similarly, religious books, again very cheap, sell in large numbers. Religious films, exclusively religious channels and religious programmes of other channels on radio and television, and religious videos and audios also spread sanskritisation in a big way.

Migration of Sanskritic culture, not only among Indians but also among non-Indians in many countries abroad, is becoming increasingly important Leaders of sects and other god-men and -women regularly go abroad to preach Hinduism, organise groups of followers, and build temples There is also an increasing interest world wide in Ayurveda, Yoga, Jyotish Shastra, Vastu Shastra, and classical music, dance and drama, all of which promote sanskritisation in one way or other The kind of Hinduism that is spreading abroad is highly Sanskritic, usually packaged in attractive capsules This demand for Hinduism abroad has implications and complications for Hinduism at home

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One may wonder how sanskritisation can grow in modern India when it is also getting increasingly westernised—some may prefer to say de-sanskritised Srinivas has discussed this issue at length in many of his writings, and I would not like to cover the same ground here I may state only briefly that there is a dialectical relation between the two processes, involving a selective attitude towards the past. While some elements of the past are renewed, some others are rejected. This selective attitude does not reduce the importance of sanskritisation. I may mention here one typical illustration of the power of Sanskritic ideas. Nowadays modernised women do not observe during the period of menstruation the traditional rules of purity and pollution. Nevertheless, they are highly conscious of the same rules while worshipping gods in temples and homes, and while performing crucial rites of passage. They control the menstrual period with the help of certain drugs made available by modern science and technology.

I will now discuss the complicated issue of sanskritisation among the dalits and the adivasis As regards the dalits, first of all I would like to reiterate two well-known points. One, though the dalits are not included in the traditional four varna model, they have always been an integral part of the Hindu social order And two, in every region of the country, the dalits are divided into castes (jatis) with considerable specialisation of occupation, and arranged in a hierarchy of their own. This hierarchy replicates to a large extent the hierarchy of the non-dalit castes For example, in Gujarat the dalits have a caste called Garoda (literally, guru) which claims to be Brahman Its members wear the sacred thread, bear such Brahmanic surnames as Trivedi and Vyas, and work as priests to other dalit castes They used to learn to read the Hindu sacred texts even in the past, and are well educated now There is also a caste of bards called Turis, who enjoy like other bardic castes a certain sacred status among the dalits The caste of Bhangis (scavengers) is the lowest The middle rungs are occupied by Vankars (weavers), Chamars (leatherworkers) and Senwas (menial workers, rope makers, messengers) In the traditional society itself, the process of sanskritisation operated among the dalits through this caste order, that is, a lower dalit caste emulated the culture of the higher dalit castes. This happened, of course, in addition to emulation of the culture of non-dalit castes (see Shah 1987 and 2002)

In modern times, certain new developments are pushing this traditional process further Firstly, the anti-untouchability laws have enabled at least legally the dalits to enter temples. This has facilitated their participation in the Sanskritic culture of temples. Secondly, many older sects are now admitting the dalits as lay members, and new sects, like the Satnami sect in Chhattisgarh, are also emerging among the dalits

Thirdly, in several parts of the country, the dalits claiming descent from ancient figures like Valmiki and Eklavya, emulate Sanskritic style of life Fourthly, with education, new occupations, and migration to urban centres the dalits are increasingly being influenced by Sanskritic Hinduism spread by the modern media All in all, these sanskritising forces are enabling at least the upper castes among the dalits to get integrated into the wider social system, thus opening further avenues of sanskritisation for them The lower dalit castes, particularly the scavengers, will take more time to get integrated

As regards sanskritisation among the so-called tribal groups, I would like to tread cautiously, because of my limited field experience among them as well as inadequate reading of the literature on them. To begin with, I would like to make a few general points Firstly, we need to change the general approach that has reigned supreme for long in studying the tribals. The use of the word 'tribe' in the Indian context is itself problematic (see Shah 2003) It is well known that the terms 'tribe' and 'aborigine' are of western origin, introduced by the colonial rulers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The present Indian terms 'janajati' and 'adivasi' are translations of English words In early times, there was no indigenous generic term for all these groups. Usually each such group was referred to by its individual name. It is ironical that the very scholars who accept these facts consider these groups as discrete, different and isolated from the rest of Hindu society Most of the ethnographic information about them becomes available only with the establishment of colonial rule, and ever since we get it, we find them already infused with Hinduism in various degrees. This was a result of centuries of sanskritisation, however slow it might have been Those sections of tribals who lived in close proximity of Hindus-as indeed many of them did-achieved a higher degree of sanskritisation, and the others lesser degrees of it Even those of them who lived in so-called inaccessible areas in hills and forests were influenced by some degree of sanskritisation at least It is hardly necessary to point out that inaccessibility is a relative matter, and we have to ask inaccessible for whom? It is unfortunate that even in recent times a few scholars are valorising an anthropologist like Verrier Elwin who advocated an isolationist policy for the tribals

Another major obstacle in a proper understanding of the tribal situation is the monographic approach in studying the tribals. All perceptive students of tribes have pointed out the interrelations between two or more tribes, and between them and the castes living in an area. However, the general image of tribal society portrayed in anthropological literature shows every tribe as isolated, not only from the Hindu society but also

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from other tribes As far as my knowledge goes, in every region, even in north-east, there is considerable inter-mingling among several tribal groups, and the interrelations between them exhibit many of the features of inter-caste relations. However, this aspect of their life is rarely projected in the general literature on the tribals. The artificial distinction between sociology and social anthropology has also contributed in no small measure to this approach.

A third problem is the lack of recognition, let alone appreciation, of a kind of symbiosis that existed between the tribes and Hindu castes in the past Such symbiosis existed especially between tribal chiefs and many Hindu kings, and between tribal people and many popular Hindu temples This symbiosis often led to hypergamous relations between the tribal chiefs and the ruling castes, eventually leading the tribes to claim Rajput or Kshatriya status. All in all, there is under-reporting of the impact of forces of sanskritisation among the tribal people in the past

During the period of British rule and after independence, the process of sanskritisation has advanced further among the tribal groups due to a variety of forces education, modern communications, new occupations, migration to towns as well as to high caste villages, and above all the influence of such religious personages as bhagats and of their movements for religious change In recent years, two most significant developments have taken place in tribal areas Firstly, a number of sadhus and sants are now giving discourses on Sanskritic themes and in sanskritised language in these areas And secondly, while mainstream Hindu sects are spreading in these areas, new sects are emerging among the tribal groups themselves We may recall here Surajit Sinha's (1966) paper on the influence of the Chaitanya sect among the Bhumii of Jharkhand, and even more important, his reference to SC Roy's (1921) brief mention earlier of the same sect among the neighbouring Mundas of Ranchi In an exploratory study, R B Lal (1977) reported presence of seven sectarian movements among the tribals of south Gujarat Recently, in another exploratory study, Lancy Lobo (1992) has reported the presence of nine sectarian groups among practically the same tribals Historian David Hardiman (2003) has written on the emergence of a sect among the Bhils on the Gujarat-Rajasthan border during the early twentieth century Similarly, R.K. Sinha and William Ekka (2003) have shown how the Pranami sect with its main centre at Jamnagar in Saurashtra has spread among the Patelia on the border between Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh Sects have thus become an increasingly significant influence among the tribals and, as I stated earlier, sects represent a higher level of Sanskritic culture It is, therefore, necessary to study carefully the increasing pace of sanskritisation among the so-called tribals, and its implications for Indian society as a whole.

In recent years, a few scholars, particularly historians of the subaltern school, have argued that sanskritisation is a kind of conversion It is true that certain politically motivated fundamentalist Hindu organisations in recent times have been organising certain activities among the dalits and the adivasis which could be construed as attempts at conversion However, to call traditional sanskritisation as conversion would be a misunderstanding of its nature To understand its nature one has to observe the process of adoption of the items of Sanskritic culture by a group in minute detail The general impression that an entire caste or tribe as a collectivity gets sanskritised all at one go, is false. In reality, it is a long-drawn process in which the individual members of a caste or tribe adopt one item of culture after another from a respectable source or agent-a neighbour, a relative, a guru, a temple, a monastery, a religious discourse, a book, and so on When this incremental process reaches a critical stage, the caste, or tribe, or a section of it claims a higher status as a collectivity The sanskritised section might even form a new caste or sub-caste This stage is usually marked by a dramatic event announcing the 'arrival' Even for a sadhu or sant to give a discourse on a Sanskritic theme, or for a fundamentalist organisation to attempt conversion, in a tribe or caste would require a certain level of sanskritisation already achieved by that group after a long process of sanskritisation

In the changing social scenario, the process of sanskritisation is thus getting increasingly de-linked from castes, including the so-called untouchable castes and from the so-called tribes. The upper castes are no longer the sole, or even the main, agents of sanskritisation for the lower castes, and a number of non-caste structures and institutions, many of them impersonal, have become powerful agents of this process, such that there is greater sanskritisation of the society as a whole Sociologists and social anthropologists need to study the process in diverse changing contexts and think of its implications for the future of Indian society and culture

Notes

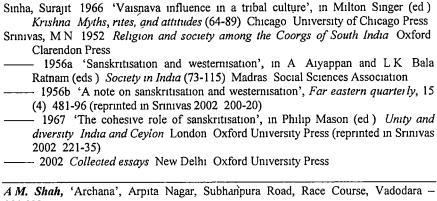
This is a revised version of my paper presented at the national seminar on 'Professor M N Srinivas The Man and His Work' organised by the Anthropological Association of Mysore on 16-18 November 2004. I thank the participants at the seminar and Owen M Lynch and McKim Marriott for their comments.

1 While citing Srinivas' papers and Fuller's interview with him, reprinted in Srinivas' *Collected essays* (2002) I have mentioned, for the reader's convenience, the original date of publication as well as the date of publication and pages in the collection

- These three rules are quoted in Srinivas (1952-72) Milton Singer (1998) has shown how these rules were essentially structuralist, and antedated Claude Levi-Strauss' structuralism, and how Srinivas was a pioneer in applying them in analysing rituals and that too in a complex civilisation such as India and not in a simple primitive society
- 3 The concern for secular hierarchy, however, continues to be strong, if it has not become stronger Moreover, there is an increasing emphasis on the principle variously called division, difference, segmentation and repulsion, which competes with the principle of hierarchy It is becoming increasingly clear that the overriding emphasis that some scholars placed on ritual hierarchy as the defining principle of caste was not applicable even in traditional Indian society (see Shah 1982, Shah and Desai 1988)

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Vosaad: The Socio-Cultural Force of Water (A Study from Goa)

Bernadette Maria Gomes

A community's cultural identity is shaped by the environment in which it finds itself The resources found in the environment play a substantial role in shaping the social life of the local people, as the process of resource use itself is social in nature. This paper seeks to illustrate how a resource that is abundantly available in a region has a bearing on the culture of the people living there. Taking the case of Goa, it shows how water, as a resource that is available in plenty, has shaped much of her people's socio-cultural life. Beginning with Goa's ecology, it delves into aspects of its community life, maritime history and folk traditions, to bring out the relationship between water and society/culture. It documents how water becomes an element of culture, evolving communities, fostering a community spirit, and adding to the people's oral traditions.

Introduction

Although by virtue of living together people create culture, it is always in relation to the environment that a community gets its cultural identity. We know that the human race evolved through effective use of resources in the environment. Human beings could not act upon nature in isolation. This necessitated certain labour patterns, which made the use of resources possible. Therefore, the process of resource use itself has a social character. The repeated use of resources would order people into definite structural units over time. Pierre Bourdieu (1990–77) describes it as the 'habitus', the basis for regular modes of behaviour in society. Stephen Fuchs (1983–74-90) and M. Gadgil and R. Guha (1992–14) have echoed the same ideas that social units are formed according to resource use and the economy.

From popular knowledge, we know that in African countries like Zaire and Tanzania, where tree growth is dense, wood is used for all sculptures and figurines in the rituals. In the Arctic, which is a treeless region, the same is done with the bones of sea mammals. In desert biomes, the nomads organised themselves socially as caravans. The Eskimos organised themselves socially into hunting bands, as sea mam-

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mal hunting was the backbone of their economy. In the southern Indian states of Karnataka and Kerala, the abundance of granite has led to development of a community of stone-carvers called as the *Shilpi*. Thus, resources available locally have a bearing on the culture of the people living in the immediate environment

This paper seeks to illustrate how a resource that is abundantly available in the environment is drawn into the socio-cultural process of community formation. I have taken the case of Goa to show how water, as an abundantly available resource, has shaped many aspects of the social life of the local people.

Water: An Eco-Cultural Reality

Water—'the tasteless, colourless, odourless liquid'—is so commonplace to us in our day-to-day lives that we often overlook the fact that we use it more than just as a biological necessity. People, in the course of using water for their biological needs, have come to understand its importance and physical properties. The presence of water, says H. Raven (1986–24-25), has been a prime factor in making our planet a suitable habitat for human beings. Not human beings alone, all species need water for their metabolism and growth. Life itself is said to have originated in the waters. This belief is not new

Holy Scriptures, creation myths and legends abound in narratives about water as the origin of all life. The following verse from the *Rig Veda*, cited by S. Radhakrishnan (1989–100), makes it clear that water was believed to have preceded everything.

Neither Non-Being nor Being existed, Neither air nor the firmament above them existed, What was moving with such force? Under whose care? Was it the deep and fathomless water?

In *The Open Bible*, the Old Testament book of Genesis (Chapter 1, Verse 2) begins likewise

The Earth was without form and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters

Similarly, references from *Al-Qur'an* by A Ali (1987–188, 302-09), in his translation, read as

It is He who created the Heavens and the Earth, in six spans, and His control was on the waters of life

It is stated further that man himself was created from water, as was every living being. In the same spirit, A K. Warder (1970–158) has recorded the Buddha as having said that before Beings, there was only a mass of water. It is not co-incidence that great civilisations evolved on the banks of rivers. Thus, it is clear that even before the advent of modern science, water was believed to have preceded all life.

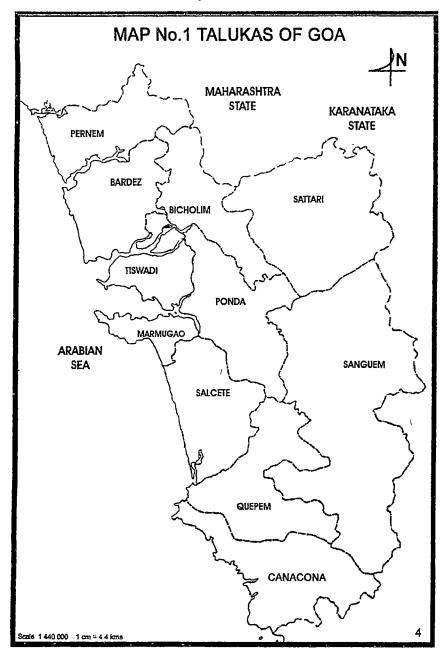
The sheer presence of water draws people into unique relationships Water thus has a far wider significance for the people than as just a biological necessity. They convert the properties of water into cultural practices. While some practices primarily take care of the biological body, they satisfy some of the collective cultural needs as well. Water and water-related practices, as we shall see, become the context in which a strong sense of community is fostered. Furthermore, water becomes the text for the articulation of several relationships within society.

Scope and Method

This paper examines water as an eco-cultural reality for the people of Goa A number of popular water-related practices have been discussed. We find that, despite the absence of any written records, folk knowledge has thrived from generation to generation. Almost all villages in the coastal areas of Goa have seawater-bathing traditions, and almost all villages have access to saline or brackish waters. For a person who has grown in the Goan village community, the water-related traditions are a common knowledge. Within this given eco-cultural milieu, I have tried to explain how the community has evolved beliefs and practices from the collective use of water that is abundantly available in their immediate environment.

The data for this paper were collected from the villages of Santa Cruz/Calapura (Tiswadi Taluka), Betul (Quepem Taluka), Candolim (Bardez Taluka), and the author's native village of Santo Estevao (Tiswadi Taluka) (see Map 1) The data on water and the beliefs about it have been mostly obtained through conversations with elderly women and men from these villages The data on folk gynaecological beliefs and the practice of seawater baths have been obtained from people who have been regular bathers for several years

This approach, no doubt, lends itself to some problems of interprettation. However, to retain the essence of the explanation, and to construct



the meaning in the English language, I have taken advantage of the fact of having grown in the same socio-cultural milieu as the respondents

This can, therefore, also be seen as an attempt to document the living traditions

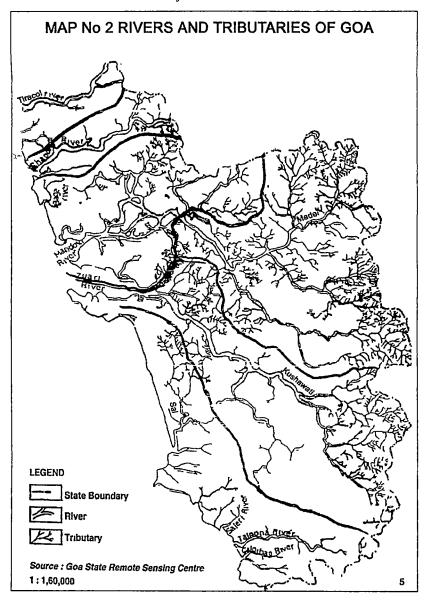
This paper seeks to explore how water as an ecological entity, that is so plentifully present, becomes a socio-cultural reality and the organising principle of community life. I begin with Goa's ecology as the point of departure, tracing the emergence of *khazans* (reclaimed lands) and the indispensability of the waterways for social intercourse. This is followed by an analysis of the evolution of some functional groups based on the presence of water and water-related activities. Finally, I have attempted to show how, in this long-standing relationship, water 'seeps' into the linguistic idioms and folk traditions of the community.

Water, the Matrix of Goa's Ecology

The State of Goa is situated on the western coast of India It is embedded in the Konkan region, which has been described as a strip of land running along the western side of the Sahayadris and the Western Ghats Topographically, the coastline of the state, which is a little more than 100 km long, is a relatively shallow sloping plane area which is sandy coastline and is ideal for coastal fishing. The central portion is raised into elevated plateaus and the eastern half rises from the elevated plateaus into peaks which are fused with the Western Ghats Sonsogad, Catlanchimauli, Wagheri, Karmalghat, and Dudsagar are some of Goa's important peaks. They are the sources of many springs. The people living in their vicinity have a legend about each one of them as wealth given by the gods.

From the eastern mountainous region the Western Ghats pour fresh water rivers into the state (see Map 2) The main rivers, beginning from north to south, are the Tiracol, Colvale, Mandovi, Zuari, Sal, Saleri, Talpona, Canacona, and Galgibag They snake their way westwards, following the natural topography of the land As they traverse from east to west, the nine rivers branch out into more than forty small tributaries that are spread across 3,701 sq km of the state Thus, almost every village is bordered by a river or a stream At some points, the steep flow from the Ghats creates waterfalls, like the Dudhsagar Falls

The phenomenon of land reclamation has added to Goa's unique ecology. The coastal silt plains had long been reclaimed from the sea by the aboriginal people like the Gavdes (Kunbi). They erected bunds to keep the lands from inundation by saline water, so they could be brought under cultivation. These special lands are called as *khazans* in Goa. The people believe that these lands are protected by a local guardian spirit, the Khazanio.



Land reclamation from the waters of the Arabian Sea as Goa's unique eco-cultural feature is reflected in many works on pre-Portuguese history of Goa (see G A Pereira 1973: 13). A Mascarenhas (1987: 20) has much discussion on the reclaimed lands of Goa Any account on the aboriginal tribes of Goa always also finds reference to lands reclaimed by them from the sea.

According to a graphic presentation by Cosme J Costa (1992 5), khazans are concentrated in the three low-lying coastal talukas of Tiswadi, Bardez and Salcete The capital city Panaji itself gets its name from the Konkani term panaz, which means a place that gets waterlogged Costa states that khazans are unique in the world Only the Polders in Holland and the lands reclaimed along the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris can be compared to them They are used to cultivate paddy in Goa According to the Goa Foundation's environment report (2002 100), the total length of the bunds is close to 2,000 km This shows the elaborate and meticulous topographical engineering that was necessitated by the presence of water

If one were to go back in imagination, perhaps several thousand years ago, one would hardly find the present map of Goa, but a group of scattered isles in the midst of estuaries Costa (1992 3) opines that the sea had probably extended up to the point where red soils are encountered in Goa today. It was only through the efforts of the aboriginal people that large portions of land were reclaimed and the present contours were formed. Since ancient times, the inhabitants of this region have thus inherited a deep relationship with water.

Nautical Highways of Social Intercourse

Another unique ecological feature of Goa is its numerous waterways. These were the main channels of transport for the people. Until the time of its Liberation in 1961, one could find many Goan villages where canoes could be hired like taxis of today. According to some local accounts, a family's wealth and standing could be estimated by the number of boats they possessed. While boat was a necessity, having them in numbers was a status symbol.

JN da Fonseca (1986 2) states that the numerous waterways were like the highways of communication, which were the means of reaching all the distant areas in Goa. The importance of waterways can also be ascertained from F. Pyrard de Laval's (2000 47) travelogue. He reports that the river passages leading to the 'City of Goa' (the first capital of the Portuguese-East India, the Old Goa today) were well guarded, and everyone was searched at certain gates along the rivers. This would be very much so as there was hardly any route where one did not have to cross a river.

In Richard F Burton's (1991 43) account of his travels in the midnineteenth century too, we see how indispensable the waterways were for transport. He mentions that to get to Old Goa from Panjim, it was a 'couple of hours steady rowing'. The journey to Shiroda village (Ponda taluka) has been described as 'an hour's rowing along the coast and entering into a narrow channel formed by the sea and innumerable little streams' It was a six-hour rowing journey to the village. In most early accounts of travels inside Goa, we find that terms like 'rowing', 'channels', 'boats', etc are frequently used to describe movements from one place to another. This also indicates how the presence of water conditioned social life.

Prior to Liberation, the *gazoline* or the motorised boat, had been introduced to ferry people across the rivers. The great number of rivulets and ferries necessitated a special River Navigation Department in Goa. This Department provides a ferry service link to many villages. In some parts of the state, canoes are still the main modes of transport from one village to another, across the rivers. This reveals that the waterways, and thereby water, were closely linked to the people's life. They continue to be central to the social life of the people.

Water and the Evolution of the Occupational Structure

Water has been the organising principle for many occupations among the peo of Goa Several special communities evolved in the Goan society as a result of their prolonged association with water. In the eastern half of the state, the many freshwater rivers, particularly the Madei in the Sattari taluka, leave the banks moist the whole year round. The people living close to these areas have evolved a form of paddy cultivation called as *puran sheti*. The moist banks are prepared and, wherever possible, mini damns are created to moisten dry low-lying areas. These banks are sown with paddy seedlings, and the flowing Madei takes care of the irrigation and nurturing. Thus, *puran* is a unique form of paddy cultivation in the winter, when no irrigation is done

The nature of *puran* and *khazan* cultivation is such that it requires the co-operation and the commitment of the community. There are days when the bunds breach suddenly. Work cannot wait for the 'NOC' (no objection certificate) from a panchayat. Nor can it wait for a cost estimate. In order to save the fields, the people simply have to stall the waters with their voluntary labour. The banks for *puran* have to be simultaneously prepared by the cultivators for the entire stretch that is demarcated. In the case of the *khazans* too, the embankments have to be taken care of along the entire riverbank beyond which the fields lie. Thus, water becomes a unifying factor, cutting across religion and caste, it compels people to act in unison and live as a community

Since ancient times, Goa has been known to produce a large quantity of salt. This is due to the presence of large shallow water areas close to the coast The shallow silt plains have been effectively used to harvest salt from the saline waters of the Arabian Sea. Huge tracts of lands were impounded into agor (salt pans). The saline water was carefully kept in to a certain level so that evaporation could be quick. This occupation induced special communities among the people, whose identity evolved from the harvesting of salt from the seawater. They are called as the Agori and Mit Gavde. While the former community is a caste, the latter are a scheduled tribe, namely, the Gavda, who diversified from agriculture to salt extraction. They are identified as Mit Gavde in the talukas of Tiswadi and Bardez where the salt pans are located.

The large areas under shallow water made Goa an important salt-producing region. Its salt trade was well known in the past C. Pinto (1994–219) says that salt was one of the chief local items of export from Goa. She reports that, in 1849, the salt production touched nearly 75,000 *khandis* (1 *khandi* = 100 kg). The quantity reflects the community spirit of the people, fashioned by the ecology of the land

Thus, by their very nature, some water-related activities could not be individual family practices, but they had to be essentially community practices. In both cases, that is, paddy cultivation and salt harvesting, we see that it is water that becomes the pretext for giving rise to a sense of community and maintaining the community spirit. In the former, lective effort is required to keep the water out, in the latter, collective effort is required to trap the water in

Freshwater- and seawater-fishing occupations also created two fishing communities in Goa Those engaged in freshwater- and brackishwater fishing are called as the Pagi This name has come from the characteristic disc-shaped net called as the *pagel*, used in the inland waters. Those engaged in seawater fishing are called as the Kharvi, a name derived from the term *khar* used to refer to the salty taste of water. There is yet another community that is identified as Gabit Local traditions have it that they were originally warriors and good navigators, given to sea warfare. During peace times, they resorted to fishing

In the plains, the brackish waters snaking through the villages are also effectively impounded with bunds. Wherever possible *khazans* have been created, and the tidal flow of water is regulated through a system of sluice gates called as the *manos*. This is another unique ecological entity in the region. The periodic opening of the shutters is so designed as to allow saline water to come into the inland rivers only up to a certain level. Costa (1992–6) explains that, where the land is above the low-tide level, the water is drained off through the gates into the sea. As the water goes out, the gates shut automatically in the direction of the flow of water. The gates then remain shut, due to the angular valve-like arrange-

ment of the shutters, preventing the saline water from rushing in at high tide

The water flowing out is also not allowed to go below a certain level, as this would also drain out the fish Besides keeping the lands dry-for paddy cultivation, the *manos* serves as a mouth for catching fish and shrimp. The bounty from the water is tapped, its distribution regulated, and during the monsoon the fields are prevented from flooding. This system of maintaining the sluice gates too requires the co-operation of the villagers along the banks of the rivers. The community of people who maintain the *manos* shutters and repair the structure is called as the Manshekar

A separate community called as Bandkar evolved exclusively to take care of the bunds. The men of this community had mastered the art of collectively repairing bunds, filling up broken bunds even while the floodwaters were gushing in At times, the *gaonkaris* (village associations) join hands to strengthen the embankments. In the past, when a village did not have Bandkars, it would borrow their services through the *gaonkari* of the neighbouring village.

Boat services were indispensable to the people. The Vodekar or the boatmen are a special community of persons who provided ferry services to the people. They are also called as the Tari (from the term tar, which means a ferry service across water). Even today, some members of this community have retained their surname. Some were also enterprising enough to keep their vessels for hire. The Tandel were the oarsmen, employed for rowing boats. The local Chari, who were otherwise carpenters, were engaged by the European master craftsmen for building ships, as they had the expertise in woodcutting and carpentry. Long before them, it was already well known that the local carpenters were very knowledgeable about timber and shipbuilding. Thus, the Goan carpenter caste was further bifurcated into shipbuilders.

The Connection with the Sea and Maritime Traditions

Goa's maritime traditions have had a long history because of its location along the western coast of India From historical records, we know that Goa had a booming maritime trade with the Middle East and the Mediterranean countries According to A Braganza (1964. 8), Alexandrian Ptolemy mentions Goa as 'Kouba' in his accounts, and that as far back as the seventh century CE Goa was known to the Arabs as 'Kawa' The fact that Goa was well known to the Arab world then shows that its contact with the Middle Eastern countries may have begun well from the ancient times

The relationships between the communities, as we shall see, came to be established once again, because of trading which was made possible through the medium of water Tome Pires (1990 54-58), who visited India in the early sixteenth century, had called Goa as the key to the first and second India, because of its strategic location along the western coast B Penrose's (1960 31) account also shows that, in the ancient world, Goa was well known to the Middle East He mentions the strategic location of Goa with its good water, good soil and good shipbuilding timber G A Pereira (1973 82) holds the view that when the Muslims conquered the island of Goa their chief intention was to have access to the west coast, as Goa had a coveted position in sea trade So much of trading activity went on from the ports of Goa that its income had been estimated by Pires (1990 55) as 4 lakh pardaos per year (approximately Rs 2 lakhs in the sixteenth century)

With so much seaborne trade and inland navigation, shipbuilding and canoe carving would be profitable businesses, as we can see from the works of F de Vasconsellos (1938) Goa's shipyards, reports K M. Mathew (1988: 303), were the best organised and most admired by the Europeans This is also affirmed by Pyrard de Laval's (2000: 41) amazement at the vastness of ship repair and shipbuilding activity at the 'City of Goa' After the Portuguese introduced the *Carriera* (one round trip of carrying cargo from Goa to Portugal and back), Goa became an important entrepôt for western Europe as well By the sixteenth century, Goa was already a busy port of call for trade along the western coast of India Once again we have Pyrard de Laval (2000: 27) writing that it was a marvel to see a great multitude of people coming and going by sea everyday. Thus, it was the sea that prompted so much maritime activity and cross-cultural contact

Water and Community Organisation: The Case of the Goulys

In regions away from the coast, the brief seasonal scarcity of drinking water led the people living there to evolve myths, and prompted beliefs accordingly Here I shall examine some beliefs among the Gouly tribe in Goa

The Goulys are a pastoral tribe living in the foothills of the Western Ghats in Goa Traditionally, they have been buffalo and goat herders They were semi-nomadic until recently. The state Forest Department's restriction on their entry into the forests has imposed a settled lifestyle on them today. They are said to be a sub-group of the Dhangars in Maharashtra R.E. Enthoven (1920 311), in his work on castes and tribes of Bombay, has listed twenty-two endogamous and 108 exogamous groups

of Dhangars In Goa, they identify themselves as Gouly and live as a homogenous tribal group consisting of twenty-seven exogamous clans

Goulys moved in the elevated grasslands and the foothills of the Ghats, within the heavy rainfall areas, avoiding the arid regions, as the wet climate was most suited to the cattle Unlike other populations, they established habitation wherever fodder was available for their herds Many Gouly settlements were, thus, to be found away from water sources, but close to grazing grounds Till today, Goulys live isolated from the rest of the state's population They are concentrated in the western half of the state, mainly in the plateau regions. In the monsoon months, they are surrounded by water. The rains create innumerable springs and streams which all flow towards the east. As winter approaches, the surface water dries up, save for a few ponds.

The Goulys, who until recently were semi-nomadic, never dug wells, as they would shift residence once every five years Potable water was scarce in summer, yet the Goulys were resourceful in using the limited water in the plateaus. The cattle, when taken to the grazing ground, drank their fill at a spring. The Goulys consumed very little milk, but they churned much of it into *loni* (butter) and the rest of it into *tak* (butter-milk), which was consumed as water. Even now, they consume at least 50 percent of their water requirements in the form of *tak*. Thus, the cattle become the surrogate water bearers in the dry months to provide drinking water to the people. This is the reason why *tak* itself is called as *pandrem pani/udok* (turbid water) among the Gouly

The water scarcity in the dry season has led to the belief that it is a taboo to step into water. The Goulys have to hold a *gharanem* (collective prayer) to ask for forgiveness from their goddess, Malchi Pander, if their feet accidentally even come into contact with the water in a spring. After attending to the call of nature, they wipe themselves clean with stones and leaves, and they are forbidden to use water for cleaning themselves. It was, in fact, considered unethical to use water for such cleaning. The few drinking water sources had to be kept pure, or else it would mean disease and death for the cattle as well as the people.

Thus, the Goulys do not have a tradition of bathing at springs in the summer, unlike the rest of the population who throng to springs at that time. On the contrary, the ecological conditions (scarcity of drinking water in the summer months) in which they lived, because of their pastoral lifestyle, have been encoded into cultural practices specific to the Gouly community.

Water, Baths and Beliefs

Every year, from March to May, many beaches in Goa are crowded with bathers At first, they appear to be just holidaymakers trying to beat the heat Only a closer look reveals that they are mostly women in their fifties and above, taking therapeutic baths. Where the sea is not so accessible or the womenfolk are not keen to spend the days under the hot sun, manos (the village sluice gate) is used for the purpose. A wooden plank is fitted across the gates a little below the low tide level. The bathers can perch themselves on it, and take the shower from the waters gushing through the gates.

The seawater baths reveal the following characteristics:

- The bathers come in groups Often entire families camp at the beaches renting a house or a part of it, for the duration of the baths Sometimes the elderly men also accompany them When they do not, the women and children of the neighbourhood get together, organise the food and lodge, for the time to be spent on the beach
- The bathers always proceed as a bathing party Neighbours, rather than kinsfolk plan the dates and the camp No person comes as an individual bather. The event is clearly a community activity. There is, therefore, as much chatting as there is bathing in the waters.
- There is visible group interaction Exchange of gossip, advice and sharing of problems is the dominant activity in the evenings. Once again water here forms the pretext for an as much social as therapeutic event. The social intercourse is built into the process of the bath. In fact, the baths appear to be just incidental to the interaction.

To understand the practice of seawater baths we have to begin with folk gynaecology Among the people of Goa, particularly in the coastal areas, seawater baths are believed to have much to do with the physiology of a woman's body. The practice is believed to stem from the special needs of a woman's body. The following account from the elderly women in the villages of Goa explains the beliefs behind the seawater baths.

To begin with, the body of a woman is believed to be different from that of a man When a girl (*chedum*) begins to menstruate, she becomes a woman (*bail*) The periodic flow of blood from the body lets out unwanted substances (*mell*)

When a woman enters menopause, two things are believed to happen to her some women say that she begins to lose salt (mit) from the body, whereas all assert that menopause prevents the unwanted matter (mell) from leaving

the body, thus causing the blood to thicken (rogot atta or daat rogot) over a period

Thick blood (daat rogot) makes the joints painful and swollen, a great discomfort in day-to-day life. In order to dilute the blood to its previous consistency, and make it flow swiftly through the body, seawater baths (kharem udok) are believed to be beneficial. Only seawater can dilute the blood. The best results come from exposure to the strong waves that break at the beaches.

The baths have to be taken in odd numbers only beginning with one, and ending with seven baths. This means a woman may take just one bath for the whole year. Women who take just one bath remain in the water for almost the entire morning and noon, coming out only for snacking and drinking. Those taking more than one bath remain in the water till noon. They resume again the next morning.

Once they begin, the same number of baths has to be repeated annually in summer A break in the bathing cycle could cause their problems to aggravate So, the seawater baths are an annual ritual till death or invalidity

Bathers should not take a freshwater bath till the required number of seawater baths are over The salt (mit) has to seep as deep as it can into the body. The baths are timed when the salt content in the water is maximum, that is, in the summer months

Baths can also be taken during the high tides between October and November (the month of *Kartik*) The right days are when the water turns a muddy red along the coast The waters themselves are called as *rogtachem udok* (blood water) They are especially sought as a remedy for painful joints

Although the bathers say daat rogot can only be diluted (rogot patol zata) with seawater, these appear to be metaphorical explanations. Take, for instance, the phrase rogot atta, used as an expression for thick blood Atta is a culinary term in Konkani, used to describe a curry that has become thick and viscous due to repeated cooking. The curry can only be diluted with water to bring it back to its original consistency. The same analogy is used to explain the dilution of blood with seawater. The fact that bathers do not take a freshwater bath till the seawater baths are over shows that the sea is sought for its salts. Therefore, rogot patol zata (which literally means 'to dilute blood') implies the revitalisation of blood with sea salts to get back the original composition. The beneficial substances believed to be lacking in the blood are taken from waters that already have salts in them, that is, kharem udok. This also conforms to

the local belief that women lose salts from the body with age Thus, people go to the sea to recover the salts (mit) lacking in the body

The sea is sought not only for trade and food, but also for the belief in its health restoring qualities. Here therapy is fused with group interaction. In fact, the interaction itself can be treated as part of the therapy, which contributes to the sense of well-being among the bathers.

Besides the seashores, one would find bathers at the numerous springs too, in the summer months S Esteves (1966 74) mentions that Goa has about forty well-known springs In the elevated plateau regions and in many other villages we find seasonal springs which come up during the monsoon and flow till the month of December Besides the well-known springs, there are several smaller ones which have been built into wells in private properties. If they are considered together, Goa can boast of thousands of springs

Goa's springs and the sweet waters thereof had drawn the attention of early travelers and the Portuguese, too GA Pereira (1973–17) mentions that Ibn Batuta, on his visit to Goa in the fifteenth century, had described the island of Goa as surrounded by a gulf, and having sweet water Pires (1990–57) had said that the kingdom of Goa was the most important in India, having famous orchards and water Pyrard de Laval (2000–34) notes with interest that the great fort on the north side of Panjim (presently Fort Aguada) had a dual purpose, to keep the enemies from attacking and even from taking water from the famous spring over there This indicates that the early foreign traders already had knowledge about Goa's fine water resources

Springs have had a special significance for the local people. They were treated as properties of the gods and to which man was a mere intruder. Many springs are sacred sites in Goa. There are others where strict rules of consumption are followed, and breaking the established norms is considered a breach of taboo. Below I cite a few examples

- In the village of Khordem in Quepem taluka of South Goa, the spring is believed to be the abode of the local guardian deity the *Zolmi* No person can step into the main pool at the source Drinking water may be collected from the stream flowing from it, and menstruating women cannot step anywhere near it
- In the picturesque seaside village of Betul in South Goa, there is a freshwater spring at the foot of the popular Baradi hill This spring is known to be the abode of the local goddess *Baradkarın* She is believed to bathe in the spring waters. Here too, water is collected from the flowing stream and it is a taboo to step into the source. On special occasions, women keep a lighted lamp for the goddess.

- In the verdant village of Rivona in Quepem Taluka of South Goa, there are several springs, which the people believe were used by the ancient rishis and Buddhist monks who once inhabited the village. Next to a mutt, there is a well in an underground cave, which is believed to have been used by ancient rishis during their long periods of meditation. The three springs around the mutt are considered sacred by the local people. The water is believed to be energised.
- In Old Goa (the old capital city of the Portuguese) in Tiswadi taluka of North Goa, the domed shrine of Saint Cajetan has a well right inside the Church, in front of the main altar Another well at the ruins of the old St Paul's College close by is associated with St Francis Xavier He is believed to have bathed at the well everyday Many Christians consider its water to have healing properties
- v In the village of Verna in Salcete taluka, there are many freshwater wells and springs So numerous were the water sources in this village that the ancient name given to this village was Varunapuri. This also shows how closely related water was thought to be with beings divine

Spring waters have also been associated with health restoring qualities. The Portuguese in the 'City of Goa', as it was known then, used the water of the famous Bainguenim spring for drinking. The spring, situated about 1 km away from the city centre, was known to have healing properties, and its sweet taste has been exalted by Pyrard de Laval (2000 7, 70-72) in his travelogues. He mentions that, at the city hospital, Bainguenim water was specially brought in for the sick people. So well known was the water that it was sold by slaves in the city. Often, other well waters were also circulated as Bainguenim water.

Some of the springs, like the sea, are popularly believed to give relief to certain ailments. The Orgaon village spring in Tiswadi is well known for clearing eyesight. One of the many springs in Rivona, called Takazor, with its sulphurous waters is well known for healing skin infections. Similarly, around Goa, F. Gracias (1994–172) has reported the following springs to be popular among the people as a remedy to specific illnesses.

- 1 Ambora spring (Salcete taluka) beneficial against skin eruptions
- Beloy spring (Salcete taluka) remedy for nervous diseases and haemorrhoids
- 111 Assagaon lake (Bardez taluka) remedy for lung infections
- iv Maina-Batim (Tiswadi taluka) beneficial for blood purification
- v St Peter's spring (Ponda taluka) helpful in clearing eyesight

One cannot fail to notice the gender dimension of spring water baths, too Although there is no belief about the connection of freshwater and folk gynaecology, the bathers are largely women of all ages Whether the spring waters really have the respective curative properties for specific diseases or not has neither been documented nor proven. The beliefs, however, are very deep-rooted among the people, based on cases of cures 'reported' from time to time

The most likely conclusion that one can draw is that water acts as a cohesive force and a pretext for social interaction. It contributes to a break in the monotony of domestic life for women. Thus, like the seawater baths, in a latent way, water becomes the matrix within which group interaction takes place. It is entirely the domain of women in the public sphere. The male members in the bathing parties are few, or in most cases conspicuously absent. The baths fulfil therapeutic as well as social requirements of the community.

Folklore Traditions

The closeness to water and water-related activities would obviously find expression in folk traditions among the people of Goa As Indra Deva (1989–105) suggests, imagery for folklore in peasant society is drawn from rural life J Handoo and R Kvideland (1999–6) call it a living tradition, because it is based on life The familiarity with the sea, streams, boats, rivers and the boatmen is thus reflected in many aspects of Goa's folklore and folk performances

This can be seen further in some mythological traditions of Goa as well A popular myth about the creation of Goa found in the Sahayadri Khand, and also recorded by A Crawford (1987 20-23) is that of Parashuram, one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu From a mountaintop in the Sahayadris, he hit an arrow in the ocean and commanded Samudra—the Lord of the ocean—to make it recede At that point, the land of Goa rose up from the sea Thus, as this myth has it, the land itself, so irrigated with freshwater and seawater, was believed to have had its origin in the waters itself

The Christian fishermen celebrate the feast of St Peter (who was a fisherman himself) as the Sangodd (two boats tied together side by side) A sangodd is used to load goods on to, for transportation across the rivers. The boats are decorated colourfully and the statue of the Saint is paraded along the river. The Hindu fishermen also have similar sangodd celebrations where a local deity is paraded on the waters. It is the boat, which serves as an important means of communication and transport, which is the central focus of the festival. Today, there are boat-decoration competitions organised during the sangodd

The boatman (taryalvodekar) was a much-respected person in the villages. He is addressed even today as mama, which in Konkani kinship

terminology is the term of address for one's mother's brother. Thus, a boatman was always to be addressed as tarya mama (uncle boatman). Some folksongs and folk performances reveal this relationship with the boatman. Given below is a verse from the operetta called as the dekhmi, which has been immortalised by hotels, tourist-boat operators and elite. Christian parties. The performance opens to swaying belles who are trying to woo the boatman to take them across the river at night to the village of Shirodem, as they have to be in time for a wedding

Hanv saiba poltodi vetam, Damulea lagnak vetam, Makam saiba vaatu dakhai, Makam saiba vaatu kolona

Aagaa mujea tarya mama, Makam voron pavoi, Shirodeam, Hoi! Shirodeam!

(I want to go across the river, for Damu's wedding, but I do not know the way,

Oh! Uncle boatman, Ferry me across, Take me to Shirodem Yes! Shirodem)

A dulpod (folksong) sung at the end of the dekhni goes as follows

Voilea, voilea, dongrar, Udoku kongrem, udoku kongrem zalear, Nanv mujem Mogrem

(High up in the hills, the water comes curling down, if that is so, my name is *Mogrem*)

The vovios are songs in the form of couplets and verses. The themes are generally aspects of village life. Given below are some examples which illustrate how a vivid imagery is created with a close relationship with water.

Tarya gelo poltodi, Volo urlo altodi

(The boatman has gone on the other side of the river, He has left his oar on this side of the river)

Dorian ailem larum, Ani larar ailem tarum, Tarvan ailo nevro, Bab re amcho!

(From the sea came a wave, on the wave came a ship, from the ship came an eligible bachelor, Mr So and so)

Vodekara, Vodekara Makam voron pavoi Shoirdeam

(Boatman, boatman, ferry me to Shirodem)

The network of maritime activity across the Arabian Sea is also reflected here, as in the case of the following *dulpod*:

Afrıcak eko tarum budolam ga, Dorya marun laru

(At Africa a ship has been sunk, By a wave from the sea)

Yet another *dulpod* can be cited to show the indispensability of the numerous waterways for the people, for transport

Aare mujea Joao baba, Tum Mapxem vetolo zalearı, Maka vor tugelea vodhearı

(Oh John! If you are going to Mapuca, Please take me too, in your boat)

Fish is the most important food item obtained from the waters Popular literature has often rightfully termed fish as the soul of Goan cuisine Even the socially powerful and ritually pure Saraswat Brahmins of Goa have traditionally been 'fish-eating' Brahmins The most vivid example of the people's maritime activity and their close connections with water and seafood can be illustrated from a folk-song from the coastal villages of Salcete taluka. The song narrates a fish's wedding celebration somewhere in the sea. We find the names of nineteen different fishes mentioned in the song (the local names of fishes have been emphasised)

Tarleachea Matvant

Tarleachea matvant gorvanto nacho, Anı gorvanteak polloun to buranto hanso, Shevteak tıdok marun tacher marlo mocho, Achea ragan M C ravlo bankocho

Kazar komes zaina fudem twist korunk lagleo *velleo*,
Pottar mutti marun bitor jevtaleo *kurlleo*,
Are, *Korkorian* kusnan vochun sanvichi chorleo,
Cake katrunk suri gheun bhonvtaleo *korleo*

Sangonk bhavano kallzak bosta re dhoko, To rock-n-roll nachonk *topo* sarko noko, Meuta tenem, yenem,tenem, alloitalo foko, Choryecheo sandvichi khavon *korkoro* vonko

Nachon, nachon sogli rat *raumos* zalem amot, Tantun modem saud korunk gusovtalem *sangot*, Are musigo matse tamsher asle, vazounk lagle romot, Nachon nachon *shetke* vokol fugon zali gumot

Kai bore nove nove dance te vazo, *Shevtali, palvakodem* nachtana lozo, Anik baba mojean nachoncheak nezo, Dista tum pollunk sarko kailintlo bozo

Kazar kabar zaınam fudem *gobrıan* kestanv kelem vodlem, *Waggen* tondko marun poılem gobrıachem fodlem, Are zogdım adavunk *sungot* pasun modekat podlem, Churchurem, *kallundur* pasun, dukhannım rodlem

The people of Goa also classify water into several types as follows, their criteria for classification being drawn from the folkways of looking at water, depending upon its source and its physical properties

- 1 Kharem udok-Saline water, seawater
- 11 Sayem udok-Brackish water, found in the rivers and ponds in the western part of the state
- 111 Goad udok- Sweet water or potable water
- IV Pochok/Pochkem udok-Water that is insipid or acrid to taste
- v Khodpachem udok-Freshwater that gushes out from rocks It also stands for a pond formed among rocks The essential criterion is the presence of rocks in the water
- vi Zorichem udok- Stream or spring water, this is flowing freshwater
- vii Rogtachem udok—Saline water along the beaches, which sometimes turns a muddy red This water appears in the months of October-November, and is used as a therapy against painful joints
- VIII Pandrem udok—Buttermilk It is called so because its appearance is turbid white, and is consumed by the Gouly as a substitute for drinking water in the summer months

Water can also have sacred properties Consecrated water is called as *turth* by the Hindus, and the Portuguese term *azmente* is used by the Christians in Goa. We see from the classification that when water is believed to be a biological resource the term *udok* (water) is used as a suffix Thus, the eight types of water are different types of *udok* However, water believed to have sacred properties is understood as a different entity; it is called by a different name altogether and the term *udok* is never used. We can conclude that the folk conception of water as a physical substance is *udok* As a spiritual entity, it is *tirth* or *azmente* having a character of its own It rises above being a mere resource, and it is believed to have a power of its own

Water in the Local Linguistic Idioms

The local linguistic idioms show that water is often used to signify a shared sense of community, over and above caste and clan affiliations. In Goa, there are some common Konkani expressions which indicate the fact that the use of a common source of drinking water drew people together as a community. The idioms clearly suggest that the character of the people from a particular geographical area was attributed to the water that they consumed. The following are some Konkani idioms illustrative of the water-community nexus

Saat bainchem udok pita (Drinking water from seven wells) The phrase is used to describe a person who cannot keep loyalty to his own community In other words, one is expected to use the water source used by the rest of the community This signified a spirit of together-

ness Drinking water from different sources was equated to pledging loyalty to more than one community, which spoke of poor character

- 11 Ekech koden udok piya (Let us drink water together) This phrase is used to say 'let us live together and share our resources', especially in the context of a daughter losing her spouse, or a son losing his source of livelihood. It can be read along with the first idiom, where drinking water from a common source signified togetherness.
- III Tanchem udokuch toslem (Their water itself is not good) The statement is used to say that if persons do not have a good character, or are not trustworthy, it is because the water that they consume is not good By implication, good water gives good health and character Bad water gives bad health and character Thus, water is believed to shape even man's mental faculties

In Goa, many villagers travelling to other places in the past refused to drink water from strange sources, unless it was a well or spring known to be popular with travellers. The reason given was that one should use only the water sources used by one's ancestors, as spirits tend to dwell in isolated wells and at other lonely water sources. If they are evil spirits, they may harm a person. The person harbouring evil spirits in him through the water may in turn harm the people from the community.

Just as the concept of common blood draws people into a kinship, so is the belief that the water that people use from a common well also draws them together as a community. The people believe it establishes quasi-kinship through the consumption of water from a common source. Thus, water acts as a driving force to generate a strong sense of community.

The Konkani language has several proverbs and sayings in which water, streams, rivers, sea salt and the boat are used as metaphors to convey meaning. The constant presence of these elements in the people's lives has extended their use as semantic tools. Often their properties and functions are used metaphorically. Once again, this is a reflection of the people's relationship with water and water-related activities. Given below are some instances of the way in which a single element—water and the activities related with it become the text for conveying diverse meanings.

- Udkache duddu udkant gele (Money from the water goes in the water)
 Whatever is ill-gotten never flourishes or nothing meaningful comes
 out of it Usually it is lost Whatever is gained unlawfully is often lost
 without hope of retrieving it Like a thing dropped in running water is
 impossible to get back
- Kurddi udkak geli, ghagor foddun ghara aili (A blind woman went to fetch water, all she did was to break the pot and return) Only a person

- capable for a particular kind of job should be assigned to do it, else his labour will result in a greater loss
- iii Chodd uddta to buddta (He who jumps too much gets drowned) When in the water, one should not jump and show off, as this will surely lead to drowning This saying is the equivalent of the English saying 'pride goes before a fall'
- w Dusreachea tondant udok pielear tan bhagona (You cannot quench your thirst by watching others drink water) Merely dreaming does not achieve anything, one has to act in order to get something done
- v Tollem rakhta to udok chakta (Those who guard the pond always taste water) If you keep your water source clean, you will never run short of water This is also used to say if you use your resources sparingly, then you will never run short of necessities
- vi Addechea udkant bain borona (You cannot put water from outside to keep water in a well) If you try to show others what you are not, it will always be seen through This is also used to say that you cannot fool everybody all the time
- vii Tan dhanvta udkak, udok dhanvona tanek (Thirst runs after water, and not vice versa) If you are in need of something, you have to work towards it, it will not come after you Also, if you know that you are dependent on someone, you have to humble yourself
- viii Udkantlo shevto udkant motto (The mullet can show off only when it is in the water, not outside it) You cannot afford to show off anywhere and everywhere One should never be over confident of one's strength, and capabilities Also, if one thinks that he/she is great, it does not mean that others will accept it
- Udkant as a maso mol korta piso (While the fish is still in the water, the fool fixes a price for it) Like counting one's chickens before they are hatched
- x Udkar ghoddo ani zomnir voddem? (Can one sail a boat on the ground and make a horse gallop on water?) There is a right place and a right time for everything This saying brings to the fore the principle of doing the right thing at the right time
- xi Udkarıı nıdta puddırıı nıdta (He can sleep soundly on dust as well as water) This is said of a person who can adjust to any kind of adversity and can work in any kind of situation
- xii Udka poros thond (Cooler than the waters) This is said of a very patient and tolerant person
- xiii Dudvanchem udok kelem (To make money flow like water) It means to spend a lot of money The money spent on something important is compared to the endless flow of water from a river
- xiv Ghamancheo zori keleo (Made springs out of sweat, or sweat-flowing like a spring) This is said for a person who works too hard
- xv Khavtem podlam (Breach in the bund) This statement is particularly used when a person loses his tooth, which shows a gaping hole when he smiles

xvi To zaite desamchem udok piela (He has had water in many lands)
Used for a person who has travelled extensively and has gathered a lot
of wisdom from many lands

Similarly, the boat appears in many Konkani sayings

- Tarık duddu dıun peun gelo (Inspite of paying the boat fare, he went across swimming) Used to say that a person's efforts have all been in vain
- 11 Duddu na tannem tanr poilo boscho (Those who do not have money try and make their way first in the boat) This is like saying that beggars are trying to be choosers
- Alexa tann re volo, hanv burgo muga, Alexa jev re, hanv manaim muga (Alex, row the boat, Oh! I am a child, Alex, come to eat, Oh! I am a man) Said when a person tries to shun work saying that he is too young for the job, and yet when it comes to eating he says he has to get a lion's share, because he is a full-grown man
- rv Kumpar kumar ghorakoddem, duddu farik kor voddeakoddem (Godfather and Godmother-at home, pay your fare at the boat) Like saying do not mix business and friendship This is also used to say that a person treats his relatives well, but when it comes to money, he forgets all relations
- V Kunviam soit tarum gillem (He ate the boat along with the sails) Said of a person who is unduly anxious for even a small job, one who worries too much and overworks himself
- V1 Tarum bhorunk gelolo portolo, pott bhorunk gelolo portunk na (He who went to fill the cargo boat has returned, but he who went to fill the stomach has not yet returned) Used to say that though the boat is larger than a man's stomach its capacity, has limits, but a human stomach/greed has no limits
- VII Gabteank gorvam ani bhotank tarvam konnem sangleam? (Who has ever heard of Brahman's sailing ships and fishermen tending cattle?) Some people are meant to do only particular types of jobs, they are not good at others. Some people are naturally endowed with the capacity to do certain things.

Sea salt too, appears in many Konkani sayings

- Nirbagi veta thoim kharem udok pavta (Wherever an unlucky person goes, its like salty water reaching the wells there) In the summer months, water in some wells in Goa turns salty. This is compared to a luckless person, who would bring bad luck even to the place where he happens to go, just like the salt that reaches the wells.
- 11 Doriantlem mitt ani bailentlem vaitt yeta (The sea yields salt, and women yield evil) What comes from the sea, but salt, what comes

from a woman, but evil Women are believed to be the cause of many bad things, especially when they are menstruating. The comparison here is with salt's tendency to constantly crystallise, as it is always present in seawater. In the same manner, evil is always there in a woman, so all she can yield is evil.

- 111 Mitt koso lok (The crowd gathered was like salt) This is used to describe a very large crowd, infinite numbers
- IV Dhoria konn dhuit ani marog konn pushit? (Who can wash away the salt from the sea, and who can wipe the dust from the roads?) This is used to describe some impossible tasks
- v Mitt khata to udok pietolo (He who eats salt will eventually drink water) This is used to say that those who commit misdeeds will some day pay the price
- vi Sheeta fudem mit khata (Eating salt before the rice) This is used for a foolish person who makes a statement beforehand. This is also used to describe a boastful person

From this brief analysis of idioms, we can see that certain attributes are assigned to water, the boat and sea salts when used semantically

Water - flows endlessly

- can absorb anything
- can harbour evil spirits
- shapes character
- shapes experience
- becomes a source of justice
- can teach a lesson to the boastful

The boat compares with - human greed

- people's opportunism

- human anxiety

- man's lethargy for work

- auspiciousness

- wasted efforts

Salt denotes - infinity

- lucklessness

- tendency for evil

- boastfulness

- impossible tasks

- punishment

Thus, a wide variety of meanings is conveyed using water, salt and sailing For the people, these elements and activities form a part of their quotidian ethos. They are used analogically for linguistic construction

Conclusion

From the brief treatment of Goa's ecology, maritime history and folklore, we can conclude that—'the tasteless, colourless, odourless liquid'—is not just a biological resource for the people Water has generated communities and fostered a sense of community, charted the course of history, evolved beliefs and rituals, contributed to oral traditions of proverbs and idioms, and it remains the matrix of social life for the Goan people

Notes

I am thankful to the anonymous referee for her/his encouraging comments and useful suggestions

There is no literal translation in English for the Konkani term vosaad. It variously means the force with which water hits a surface, the push that one experiences when one is wading in water, and the energy of the water to carry objects away. It is also used in the Konkani language to refer to a domineering person who never fails to make his presence felt.

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Book Reviews

Laura Desfor Edles and Scott Appelrouth: Sociological theory in the classical era Text and readings Thousand Oaks Pine Forge Press (An Imprint of Sage Publications), 2005, xiv + 402 pp, \$59 95 (pb) ISBN 0-7619-2802-2

This book gives a student-friendly text to help students understand the works of classical sociological theorists. It also discusses the continuing relevance of classical sociological theory to our understanding of the problems confronting contemporary society

The authors have adopted a four-axis model-from rational to non-rational, and from individualistic to collectivistic Under the rational axis, theorists such as Karl Marx, Max Weber and Charolette Gilman are included, and under the non-rational axis, Emile Durkheim and WEB Dubois Individualistic axis includes theorists such as George H Mead and Georg Simmel, and the collective axis, Weber, Marx, Gilman and Dubois

The book contains selections from the works of the theorists chosen It will be useful to students and teachers of classical sociological theory alike

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Mahendra K. Premi: Social demography A systematic exposition New Delhi Jawahar Publishers and Distributors, 2003, 324 pp, Rs 157 (pb) ISBN 81-7361-121-1

The growing concern about the alarming population growth and its farreaching implications needs to be understood in a systematic manner. It is, therefore, necessary to educate our students and youth on the many facets of population and its relationship with environment and development. In the book under review, Mahendra K. Premi fulfils this requirement of a simple textbook for the undergraduate and postgraduate students of India to familiarise them with demographic issues and concerns

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The chapters in the book lucidly present different aspects of population growth, composition, distribution, fertility, mortality, migration, theories of population, linkages between population growth and economic development, population polices, and family planning programme Interestingly, Premi has made all efforts to present the latest data on those topics A detailed description of 2001 census schedules, methodology, list of tables of census and reporting formats of births and deaths provides a clear idea to the students on the way in which data collection is organised in a country of more than one billion population Premi also provides insights into various population policies and emerging health problems, including the emerging challenge of HIV (AIDS) in India In this respect, this book differs from other textbooks on Indian demography Even so, one would have appreciated a more detailed analysis of demographic issues, including a better comparison with other developing countries and also between different states of India After all, India is known for its demographic diversity and heterogeneity with states having varying levels of socioeconomic development

Another important dimension that needs special attention is the emergence of state-level population policies. This has helped many states to focus their population priorities, taking into account the existing regional disparities in health and population indicators. Fertility transition is another significant and visible demographic process at the national level Considering India's economic, cultural and geographical diversity. the fertility patterns differ greatly across states, with a clear north-south divide This is an area of concern not only for the demographers, but also for all interested in the development of the country. The alarming decline in child sex-ratio (population below seven years) during the last decade, as indicated by the latest census, tells us the scale of injustice as well as the long term social and economic consequences implied in the imbalance in male-female numbers. The sex ratio, one of the better indicators of the status of the girl child, is more hostile to females in their early ages, it also reflects the sum total of intra-household gender relations The volume provides useful information about this pressing problem. too For the beginners in Indian demography and population, this volume should be a useful introduction

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Mary Searle-Chatterjee and Ursula Sharma (eds.): Contextualising caste Post-Dumontian approaches Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications, 2003, 11 + 184 pp, Rs 425 (hb) ISBN 81-7033-793-3

The volume is edited with a desire to question the standard approaches towards caste in India. As the editors mention, their purpose in bringing this collection is to 'put caste in its place'. By this, they are not denying its importance, but putting under critical scrutiny ritualistic notions of caste and offering a consideration of caste in relation to other key dimensions of Indian society.

The essays in this volume take Louis Dumont as their point of departure and suggest that, while it is hard to write about caste without referring to him, Dumont's theoretical assumption that hierarchy is indeed central to an understanding of the nature of South Asian society can still be questioned Where most of the contributors agree with Dumont, however, is the need for a theoretical understanding of the role of caste in South Asian Society Declan Quigley, for instance, believes that a theory of caste is still possible, and argues that cast results from an uneasy stalemate between the pull of localised lineage organisation and the forces of political, ritual and economic centralisation encapsulated in the monarchical institutions Following A M Hocart, he suggests that the central institution is the monarchy and not, as Dumont argues, the Brahmin priesthood For Quigley, the king or the local politically dominant caste acts as the fulcrum of the system rather than the Brahmin In this, he equates the traditional institutions of kingship with political and ritual aspect of the dominant caste, a view that may not be fully correct

The essays attempt to explore other languages of caste than simply the language of hierarchy. The idea of territoriality, as a language of local dominance and self-description has been highlighted in some of the essays. The locality also introduces immense complexity to the distinction between various groups. Maya Unnithan's essay on the Girasias of Rajasthan demonstrates the impossibility of sorting out the local groups into 'tribes' and 'castes'. The complexity of local reality makes problematic even a straightforward empirical distinction between groups or communities. A theory that comprehends these diverse claims and self-identifications seems almost impossible.

In another empirical account, Subrata K Mitra argues against the essentialist view of caste, a view that attempts to depict caste as the immutable essence of an ageless Indian society. He argues for an alter-

native view, which suggests caste as a resource that political actors use in order to negotiate their status, wealth and power

Similarly, an investigation into concepts of hierarchy and equality among an untouchable caste in a Tamil village by Robert Deliege shows that, in spite of a basic acceptance of the value of caste, the Paraiyar espouse a strongly egalitarian ethic and the forms of differentiation within the village cannot be simply conceived according to a hierarchical model. Hence, Deliege suggests that Dumont's formulation that the principle of hierarchy permeates all relations within Indian society cannot account for such a social structure and merits a theorisation of a different order. It is a mistake to think, he points out, that people are either egalitarian or hierarchical

Mary Searle-Chatterjee attempts to examine the links between caste and religion, especially among those who are the lowest in status. The paper suggests that both caste and religion mean very different things at different levels of the hierarchy Ursula Sharma attempts to introduce a comparative element in caste studies by following Gerald Berreman who argued that institution of caste is not confined to Hindu India Thus. Sharma takes a course that is against the dominant trend in the ethnography of caste that is essentially non-comparative in principle and assumes sui generis nature of Hindu society. Sharma argues that comparison is a useful tool and valuable on two counts it attempts sociological generalisations of the processes of domination and resistance, and makes the analysis more open to the implicit preconceptions and values, which mark other cultures Thus, if the comparability of South Asian society, its lack of uniqueness is accepted, the volume draws our attention to two things firstly, like other peasant societies, Indian society also expresses ideas about equality and competition for status, and secondly, there are well-elaborated ideological notions about status which are neither purely materialistic nor can be described as specifically ritual or religious

The volume makes a modest attempt to go beyond the Dumontian approaches to caste and hint at what a post-Dumontian theorisation of caste might look like. The papers suggest two points of departure that the caste is just one among several principles of classification, and contemporary analyses need to write multiple descriptions of events in one location using various strategies and models, and that the question of social structure should occupy the central place in analysis of caste, and analysis should surmount the notion of the incommensurability of Hindu society without loosing the sight of the cultural specifics. The volume argues that, if a serious attempt is made to recover the comparative aspects in the analyses of Hindu society, only then it will be possible to

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develop a more comprehensive theory of contemporary India Not by any means a radical recommendation, but definitely useful one

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Peter Kivisto: Key ideas in sociology Thousand Oaks, California Pine Forge Press (A Sage Publications Company), 2004 (2nd edition), xiv + 203 pp, \$32 95 (pb) ISBN 0-7619-8823-8

Every teacher realises the importance of inspiring books that can invite young learners to the exciting domain of knowledge Peter Kivisto has indeed done a good job, his book, which both the teacher and the taught would appreciate, makes sociology immensely meaningful, relevant and intellectually stimulating. Here is a book that depicts the fundamental debates which have given a momentum to Western sociology. Its six chapters—written with a high degree of clarity as well as intellectual sophistication—give a brilliant overview of the sociological discourses to the beginner. For example, one begins to realise the importance of key ideas, like industrialism, democracy, individualism, modernity, and globalisation to conceptualise the sociological trajectory of modern. Western society. Sociology, for Kivisto, is the most ambitious of the social sciences.

Its self-appointed task is nothing less than to add to our understanding of the major trends that have given shape to the modern world. Its subject matter includes the institution singled out for attention by economics and political science as well as the family, religion, education, or, in short, the entire realm of what is called civil society

What is interesting about this book is that it succeeds in situating a spectrum of sociological thinkers in an appropriate context. For example, the third chapter on democracy depicts Max Weber in an immensely critical fashion. Is there an essential conflict between the ideal of a free democratic society and the increasing bureaucratisation of the modern world? Kivisto raises this question, and looks at Weber's deep concern that the 'iron cage' of bureaucracy posed a threat to individuality and freedom. Weber's scepticism, argues Kivisto, 'gave his work a contemporary poignancy'. In fact, Kivisto would argue that the traces of this pessimism could be seen even in Michel Foucault, particularly his notion of a disciplinary society based on surveillance. Likewise, in the chapter

on modernity, there is an interesting discussion on Georg Simmel and Anthony Giddens. The way Simmel talked about the culture of modernity, or the consequences of modernity that Giddens revealed, has acquired a refreshingly new meaning in the text. It helps the learner to see how modernity as a complex phenomenon has its ambiguities, contradictions and paradoxes.

The lucidity of the book is remarkable. Even thinkers like Talcott Parsons and Jürgen Habermas become abundantly clear to the mind of the reader. This lucidity does by no means negate the rigour and depth of the text. For instance, one realises the context in which Parsons was writing, or the way Habermas celebrates communicative rationality in the public sphere to resist 'the colonisation of the life world'. The concluding chapter on globalisation is very relevant. It is written with immense sensitivity, and it depicts divergent responses to the emerging global culture.

As one reads the book, one often wonders why this kind of project has not been undertaken by Indian sociologists. The fact is that bad text-books, exam-centric notes and the entire pedagogy have trivialised the discipline in India. It is sad that our great professors are so preoccupied with their own specialised projects that they find no time to write inspiring texts for the beginners. It is urgently required that a good sociological text on Indian society (dealing with issues relating to decolonisation and nation-making, modernity and agrarian society, caste, religion and secularism, social conflict, movements and social transformations) is written. Let Peter Kivisto inspire us

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Philip Quarles van Ufford and Ananta Kumar Giri (eds.): A moral critique of development In search of global responsibilities London and New York Routledge, 2003, xiii + 309 pp, Price not mentioned (pb) ISBN 0-415-27626-8

Development emerged as a dominant concern and ideology in the newly independent countries after World War II However, it has become highly controversial in the recent decades Post-developmentalists became prominent in the 1980s with radical Derridean deconstruction and post-structuralist thought. They declared dead the ideology-of development and international development practice of the Western governments. The anti-development attacks seem to have led to a 'moral

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impasse' in the current times. The volume under review grapples with the current deadlock in development thinking and practice. Most contributors to the volume have direct association in some capacity with development interventions, and this is reflected in the rich empirical details and insights in their contributions.

The book is divided into three parts Part I has one chapter, contributed jointly by the two editors and David Mosse It provides the conceptual framework which focuses on evolving new approach to interventions in development meant to move towards a new moral understanding of experiences and an agenda for the future Part II consists of four chapters which delve upon ethical challenges encountered in international development programmes and projects There are seven chapters in Part III (excluding the Afterword), which deals with issues confronted in coping with different kinds of knowledge related to international development interventions, including treatment of social science and certain methods used in research as intervention. The main task set in the book is 'regaining a morally meaningful perspective on development' attempt is made to 'link debates in the domains of development anthropology with contesting points of view in moral philosophy' The agenda of the book is to contribute to 'remaking development anthropology as a morally sensitive as well as a critical empirical practice'

The volume notes a deep crisis in the realm of development due to a series of disjunctures, incompatibilities or contradictions, both in micro and macro contexts There are disjunctures between different modes of development, between values and practices of application, between action and reflection, and between advocates and critics of development Having demonstrated the seriousness of ruptures, the volume emphasises the need for reinvigoration of development at conceptual, practical and moral levels to get out of the current impasse, and to reconnect the worlds of action and reflection and build bridges across borders. An attempt is made to suggest 'an alternative perspective' on development 'a multi-dimensional view of development-as hope, as politics (and administration), and as critical reflection' The effort is to 'pave the way towards greater awareness that development is a shared responsibility' involving not only 'care of the other' (that is, the third world) but also 'care of the self' (with reference to the developed world) This implies a shift from development's 'othering'

The volume makes an effort to move towards an alternative ontology of development. This involves treating the three domains of development—as hope, action and reflection—not as distinct but as forming intersecting circles without a logic of succession or the *a priori* privileging of one over another. It is held that critical and creative action

could start from any one domain, and actors in development, for example, state, market, NGOs/social movements So, there is advocated not a stable conception of development, but an 'emergent ontology' which views development as a heterogeneous field of action and imagination, and as a dynamic process of learning and mutual transformation. There is upheld the notion of 'emergent ethics' which questions universalisation of values, and advocates opening this up to a trans-cultural and trans-civilisational interrogation and dialogue

The book provides anthropological case studies in international development interventions in the third world countries, namely, India, Indonesia, Zambia, Kenya, etc These studies gel well with the conceptual framework set in the introduction to the book, and offer rich and insightful empirical details Contributors present 'ethical narratives' as they try to link moral questioning of the development enterprise to empirical analyses of specific interventions. They analyse the nature of the reciprocity between narratives and ethics. However, they do not assume fit between the two, they acknowledge 'uncertainty' in the treatment of empirical data and also in search for moral views. Each contributor offers suggestions for charting the territory of development as a political and moral judgement.

The book reflects a strong ethico-philosophical tinge. It is successful in breaking loose the post-development and post-structuralist impasse. It largely falls in the category of post-modernist tradition as reflected in its heavy dose of contingency. Yet, it does not fall prey to relativism

The volume advocates cross-cultural/civilisation dialogue and learning in the domain of development. However, all its contributors are from Western Europe, except one of the editors, who is from India. The book is largely confined to the contemporary Western intellectual landscape. There is presented a strong moral critique of the Western hegemonic perspective of development, including the current neoliberal globalist one. However, the plea to reconceptualise development seems to be largely addressed to the Western world. Thus, it remains Euro-centric. There is no effort made to identify the material causes of domination of the West over the rest, and how that domination could be resisted and supplanted in which the rest can also contribute in an active manner, rather than keep waiting for a change of heart and mind of the West. The whole tradition of Marxist and neo-Marxist thinking on development has been largely ignored in the book. The ethical-moral edge of the volume remains essentially of the humanist-reformist type!

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P.K. Mishra (ed.): Studies in Indian anthropology (Festschrift to Professor Gopala Sarana) Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications, 2004, xii + 420 pp, Rs 825 (hb) ISBN 81-7033-850-6

The sociological and anthropological literature in India has witnessed a paradigm shift in the recent decades in terms of understanding and analysis of social realities Community studies with rich qualitative information have gradually become rare and there has been a growing tendency towards macro generalisations with statistical and mathematical rigour However, in a society like India where complex cultural diversity is in a state of constant flux, the traditional anthropological studies are as relevant today as they were before In view of the profound socioeconomic as well as political changes that have taken place in the recent past and their differential impact on various categories of Indian population, exploration of the emerging conceptual and ethnographic issues and their link with the established theoretical standpoints commands high research priority Viewed from this angle, the book under review is a welcome addition to the corpus of literature on anthropological studies It is brought out by the Anthropological Association in honour of the wellknown anthropologist Professor Gopala Sarana The variety of themes and genres covered in this volume testifies to the wide scope of Professor Sarana's scholarship

The book starts with a small note on the aims and objectives of Anthropological Association. Then the editor presents a biographical note on Professor Sarana's contribution to teaching and research in anthropology along with a list of his publications. The rest of the book is divided into five sections.

The first section consists of seven papers, three of which are mainly review articles N Subba Reddy makes a critical review of Clifford Greetz's essay 'Thick description' Towards an interpretive theory of culture'; S. Patil and TB Subha, on Karl Popper's Poverty and historicism and Robbins Burling's Rengsanggri Family and kinship a Garo village respectively Roy Burman provides a fascinating account of categories of non-verbal communication among the tribals Jan Brauer tries to integrate Brauers's field observations from Karnataka with Indological and global anthropological perspectives The remaining two papers in this section provide an analysis of textual contents as illustrated in classical Indian anthropological studies and a discourse on the definition of tribe

The second section covers marriage, kinship and social organisation among tribes. It begins with Khan's discussion on major concerns in alliance theory. This theoretical discussion is supplemented by an

empirical analysis of the marriage and kinship system among some tribes of northeast by Jayant Sarkar, and structure and function of lineage organisation of Saoras of Andhra Pradesh by N K Das The last paper of this section provides a comprehensive account of the socioeconomic profile of the Todas of Nilgiris

The next section has two papers, both dealing with religious beliefs While one describes the process of maintenance and promotion of identity and traditions of Nagore-e-Sharief, the other analyses the myth of the Kattunayakan of Wayanad in the line of Levi-Strauss's model

The fourth section is devoted to ecology, nutrition and other developmental issues. The first three articles of this section deal with the tribals, in particular of Madhya Pradesh and Kerala. The rest of the papers cover diverse issues like *devadasi* system in Kerala, patterns of food habits and food procurement among tribes, biosocial aspects of malnutrition, etc.

The last section consists of three papers covering topics relating to archaeology and physical anthropology. While the first two probe into the Mesolithic period and the process of evolution of indigenous people in India, the last article provides a genetic profile of the Karnataka population.

The book has many shortcomings The editor has not done justice due to the volume. It would have been useful if he could have written an introductory chapter on the central theme of the book including a summary of individual sections within a proper framework from which to view the papers. There are many papers in the book which are neither analytical nor informative, and some of them are of only three to four pages with very weak contents, the book would have done well without these papers. This apart, the sections as well as the papers included therein are arranged in a haphazard fashion. These sections are not only disjointed, but they also lack in perspective and rigour Besides, the book suffers from editing problems and there are many typographical errors. Taken together, it has very little to offer to sociologists and anthropologists.

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R. Narasimhan: Characterising literacy A study of western and Indian literacy experiences New Delhi Sage Publications, 2004, 198 pp, Rs 280 (pb). ISBN 0--7619-9829-2

This book examines the attributes and consequences of script literacy as identified in Western studies and locates literacy within the larger story of human evolution. All animals, including humans, can communicate

with others, at least of their own species. Human communication is special in its use of language, in its stock of words, with their assigned meanings, which allow us to articulate and to put our message in words than gestures alone. Passing from the oral to the written was a quantum leap in the realm of communication. The main task of literacy, according to R. Narasimhan, is to bring about a process of critical reflection that leads to action and social transformation.

The book traces the transformation of society from oral to traditional literacy. Narasimhan suggests that literacy is a prerequisite to modernising a society and it is an enabler of modernisation. Literacy is claimed to have played a crucial role in the historical development of European societies by providing a foundation for democracy, bureaucracy and scientific method of enquiry. The main thesis of research on the characterisation of literacy is that perception and cognition in individuals as well as social institutions and social behaviour in general, become qualitatively different after widespread acquisition of literacy.

In this context, Paulo Freire pointed out that literacy is the tool for critically evaluating and comprehending one's social context. Such evaluation helps in combating society's oppressive forces and in shaping one's environment. For Freire, literacy must deliberately involve the development of a 'critical consciousness' to bring about social and political change.

Narasımhan points out the difference between spoken and written language at the linguistic and social levels. Basil Bernstein's distinction between restricted and elaborated codes, associated by him respectively with the unskilled working-class and the literate middle-class, is of relevance to the orality-literacy distinction. It is argued that literacy must be imparted through spoken language.

Narasımhan rightly points out that literacy should not be equated with reading and writing exclusively. There are other forms of literacy as visual literacy and computer literacy. He argues that the basis of literacy is reflective behaviour, that is, reflective thinking based on the use of natural language.

Narasimhan claims that the Indian experience presents new kinds of relationship between orality and literacy. Forms of articulation that have normally been considered to be available in the literate mode through the explicit use of writing have been developed and perfected in the Indian tradition using purely oral techniques.

Narasimhan also examines the implications of the thesis that reflective thinking is the basis of literacy. According to him, the conventional view of schooling that schools are socially sanctioned institutions, whose primary responsibility are to make children literate, limits the

scope of schooling His view that school helps children learn the habit of reflective thinking, however, is not supported by the tests he administered on schoolchildren in Mumbai. He pleads for greater efforts to make children literate in the extended sense of the script. Strengthening the discourse skills of schoolchildren is the best preparation for literacy.

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Roger Sibeon: Rethinking social theory London Sage Publications, 2004, viii + 225 pp., £ 18 99 (pb) ISBN 0-7619-5069-9

Even as the postmodernist rejection of disciplinary knowledges and cumulative theory building has come under trenchant and legitimate attack, there have been determined attempts, particularly since the 1990s, to return to a post-postmodern social theory. This 'return' is not an innocent reaffirmation of a positivist and grandiose social scientific project. It is sobered by the post-structuralist correctives primarily concerning contingency, multiple loci of power and its intricate associations with knowledge, and contextuality of knowledge production. Sociology has not remained an exception to this exercise of 'homecoming' Roger Sibeon's book seeks to tie varied strands of these efforts and, by taking issues with their strengths and deficiencies, take forward the journey

Sibeon narrates probably the simplest of the sociological stories Yet, as he demonstrates, it is its primary building blocks that most practitioners and theoreticians miss out on or wilfully abuse. The point of departure in his reconstruction of a sociological metatheory is that the four 'cardinal sins' of reductionism, essentialism, reification and functional teleology are to be unequivocally guarded against Reductionism is a style of thought that reduces 'the complexities of social life to a single. unifying principle of explanation or analytical prime mover' (p 2), essentialism 'in aprioristic fashion presupposes a unity or homogeneity of social phenomena" (p 4), reification 'is the illicit attribution of agency to entities that are not actors or agents' (p 4), and functional teleology involves '[explaining] the causes of social phenomena in terms of their effects' (p 6) This formulation in itself is not new Neither is his cogent demonstration that postmodern theorisation, in spite of insisttent denials, is equally guilty of committing these sins. More facilitative though is the theoretical agenda he proposes that consciously and explicitly steers clear of these failings

Arguing that metatheoretical protocols-involving ontological and epistemological procedures, and methodological rules, which remain consistent with each other and regulate one another-are inevitable in any social scientific work, a minimal and flexible but realist and stratified/ deep ontology is proposed These provisos are essential Since 'shis' concerns . are primarily ontological' (p. 187), Sibeon dwells greatly on delineating its contours. It is minimal since it is a mere metatheoretical blueprint, while empirical enquiry does the bulk of the work in social sciences It must remain open for possibilities of empirical and theoretical revision, even while resisting a cavalier stance. It is realist, for it posits, 'there is an ontologically prior, albeit heterogeneous and often shifting empirical reality "out there" (p 23), which is stratified along three levels-macro, mezo and micro-that are relatively autonomous but regulate, in a loosely dialectical fashion, one another This ontological frame necessitates a commitment to epistemological pluralism and 'methodological bracketing' entailing working with such epistemological precepts and methods that are appropriate for a given research effort

It is in framing and defending these protocols that Sibeon engages with many recent theoretical efforts-Derek Layder, Margaret Archer, Nicos Mouzelis and Anthony Giddens are the overarching figures even as many other theoreticians (classical and contemporary) get weaved into the argument Primary to the thesis are also the carefully argued concepttions of agency ('a conditioned though not structurally determined capacity to formulate and carry out intentional acts' [p 118]), structure ('temporally and spatially extensive [yet] mutable conditions-of-action' [p 124]), chance ('unforeseen fortuitous conjunctions of causally unrelated phenomena, including conjunctions of action sequences of action' [p 145]), and the micro (referring 'to small stretches of time and space' [p 173] yet not the same as agency), mezo (referring to 'organisations and inter-organizational networks and other intermediate time-space extensions of actors, materials and practices' [p 173]) and *macro* (referring to 'large temporal and spatial extensions' [p 173] yet not synonymous with structure) levels of social life

Conflations of any sort—whether central (denying existence of differentiable levels of social reality), upward or downward (explaining one level in terms of the other)—are to be assiduously avoided, even as 'direct links' cannot be presumed to exist between levels *Time* and *space* are recognised as the relatively unexplored, yet crucial, ideas to bridge analyses of the different levels of the social Conceptualisations of *power* (understood as deriving from distinct and autonomous, if always overlapping, sources, both systemic and agentic but also relational) and 'objective' interests (that are 'attached to positions/roles, group member-

ships, and to certain social situations' [p 143]) enable one to operationalise ways of thinking about and conducting research on concrete empirical research questions

While this (potted) inventory of Sibeon's ontological model does no justice to the ways in which he weaves them together into a taut argument, his almost compulsive need to rehearse the grounds that he covers (over and above the summaries attached to each chapter) make the writing a little textbookish. Yet, what is infectious is the sheer joy and excitement involved in this intellectual journey that Sibeon so effectively conveys. The lucidity will ensure an effortless incorporation of this book into the post-graduate syllabus, while an Indian edition will enable a greater reach.

To conclude, a hesitant query from within this schema, how does one mark/establish distinctions between structures? Is it merely a matter of degree of difference, for 'essentially' all structures are the same or, more accurately, can be described in the same language? Even if that is the case, then how does one talk about the degree of difference? What are the measures of comparison that practitioners work with? One need not necessarily foreground the possibility of a non-western or, even, decolonised (whatever these categories allude to) social science to ask this set of questions For instance, how does one understand (and accordingly give value to) the question of individual (and thus, in many instances, of agent) when one is thinking about India?

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Sanjeev Prakash and Per Selle (eds.): Investigating social capital Comparative perspectives on civil society, participation and governance New Delhi Sage Publications, 2004, 315 pp, Rs 550 (hb) ISBN 0-7619-9690-7

In the era of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, the world is richer than ever before, but more than a fifth of its people are poor and miserable Civil wars and ethnic strife continue to mar the prospects for peace Democracy has proved to be less fruitful for the ordinary citizen, especially in the developing world where democratic governance failed to fulfil its promise of community peace, economic development and democratic participation. The state-led development has failed to make any considerable dent on poverty. More than a billion persons in the developing countries continue to live in miserable conditions, earning

and spending less than a dollar a day How can development, peace and democracy become more fruitful for the ordinary citizen? This question was debated at a Workshop on 'Investigating social capital' held in Solstrand, and the present volume is the outcome of that exercise This book offers a set of empirical and conceptual analysis of the social capital in India, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and Italy

Social capital, at the conceptual level, is being examined to mean the social structure and networks necessary for sustaining collective action The normative contents of these structures-trustworthiness and reciprocal relations-in conformity with the stream of benefits and interest over time remained non-consistent in second part of the book dealing with empirical studies Social capital, at the functional level, is viewed as provider of the basis for democracy and generated by the rich web of non-political associations It is constituted by the practice of associationalism and the capacity for civic participation and self-governance In such a case, how social capital is understood as networks of trust, cooperation and participation that fare either for achieving economic development or establishing democracy under conditions of social revolution? Social capital thesis is valuable, but seriously incomplete Social capital is necessary for democracy and development and sufficient on its own account for attaining each of these ends. This book offers eight empirical studies and strongly contests the theoretical generalisation of 'trustworthiness' symmetrically across a society, and the contributors treat trust and social capital as complex processes that can not be decontextualised Two articles in the book argue that where trust expands beyond local or intimate ties, it does so within specific institutional or sectoral contest Mario Diani describes low levels of pre-existing trust as well as distrust in other people's abilities or motivations to contribute to the creation of collective goods that influence individuals' decisions to participate in social groups and networks Susanne Hoeber Rudolph raises the issue of civil society as the provider of social capital She examines how well civil society works as a precondition for democracy in the Western world, whereas the civil society theory does not go well in the Indian context Basing her analysis on micro-studies presented by Indian scholars at the Uppsala Conference in Sweden, she notes that the relation between civil society and democracy can be negative as well as positive The social capital theory must answer what are the conditions and mechanisms that translate the social capital generated by associational life from inside to outside, and makes social capital available for strengthening the pursuit of public good?

The second part of the book discusses answers to the questions 'Is social capital available in equal abundance in developing countries? Can

it be built up reasonably easily? Does social capital help to improve development performance in the third world? Two articles examine the levels of social capital in Italy and the associational membership of the Netherlands, and observe the levels of social capital to be high among communities where a large number of people register for membership in a greater number of civic associations. This measure of social capital appears to be extremely poorly related with the associational membership in India, argues Anirudh Krishna in his study of sixty Rajasthan villages. The worldwide survey for 1991 shows that 85 percent of citizens in Sweden, 84 percent in the Netherlands, and 71 percent in USA reported membership in at least one association, whereas 36 percent of citizens in Mexico, 24 percent in Argentina and only 13 percent in India are members of one or more associations. Even this low extent of associational activity is concentrated in towns and only one in fifteen rural residents is member of any formal association.

The thesis of social capital derived from Western evidence does not, however, apply equally well for the developing world, particularly the Indian Society where social capital does not serve well for achieving community peace, economic development and democratic participation Villagers in India who have high social capital do not always perform well with respect to economic development, community peace or democratic participation, and villagers who have relatively lower levels of social capital often perform better. The book does not take into account the economic inequality existing between the developed and the developed world.

S.R. Ahlawat

S.N. Pawar, J.B. Ambekar and D. Shrikant (eds.): NGOs and development The Indian scenario Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications, 2004, 274 pp, Rs 550 (hb) ISBN 81-7033-834-4

The steady rise of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and their increasing involvement in socioeconomic development have provided an impetus for scholars to study NGOs. The issues such as sustainability and accountability of NGOs, their management and governance, and their effectiveness have assumed importance NGOs have been posited as a catalytic force for social change and development. Some also view NGOs as the 'third' sector, after the state and the corporate sectors

The book under review is an anthology of papers presented in the panel on 'Voluntary organisations and change' at the XXIII All India

Sociological Conference held at Shivaji University, Kolhapur It consists of twenty-three papers besides an introduction. The papers have been organised into two sections while seven papers in Section I focus on various theoretical and conceptual aspects about NGOs, the sixteen papers in Section II deal with empirical studies. The wide spectrum of issues such as the NGOs' role in creating awareness among the people, alcoholic de-addiction, gurukula system of education, rural and community development, women empowerment, issues relating to crisis in family, etc have been discussed

In Section I, scholars argue how NGOs have emerged as a force for social change Apart from articulating the rise and growth of Voluntary Organizations (VOs) in national and international contexts, Punelkar discusses various dimensions of the VOs' involvement in social change He outlines the distinct features of VOs, such as their openness, democratic and voluntarism. He argues that VOs should engage themselves in mass politics and promote people's participation in order to succeed in achieving their objectives There is a need for critical self-appraisal of NGOs, asserts Pradeep Kumar Masıhı expresses concern over the VOs' piecemeal achievements Referring to the apolitical position of NGOs, the author seems to suggest that NGOs should take up political role. which, no doubt, is a challenge for a diversified sector like them. Over the years, NGOs have undergone changes in response to the changes in the socioeconomic conditions. The change from voluntarism to professionalism is also being debated. In his study of VOs in Tamil Nadu, Shanker argues that VOs have become more donor-oriented than peopleoriented Despite having a strong legacy of voluntarism in India, one can sense the dwindling of voluntary spirit. To meet the situation, voluntary/ social work movement is the need of the hour, asserts Madan Chaudhari points out how sociological and ethno-sociological methods and knowledge contribute to the functioning of the projects of VOs

The papers in Section II highlight the strategies and approaches undertaken by NGOs in addressing various socioeconomic issues mentioned above NGOs such as Vijnanaprabodhini, Sree Kshethra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project, Marathwada Sheti Sahayak Mandal, Rotary Club, Dilsa Janvikas Pratishthan, Maharastra Arogya Mandal, Women voluntary Organizations in Kolhapur City, Jeevana Rekha, Andhra Mahila Sabha, Schedule Castes Youth Welfare Association, Aadhar, Women's Cooperation Mobilization Society, etc have been discussed as case studies These NGOs have been actively involved in working against superstition, dowry and alcoholism, and for the promotion of health, education, watershed development, afforestation,

income-generating activities, etc. Pundir discusses how Scheduled Caste elite have formed VOs to uplift their people

Although the book has covered many issues on which NGOs are working, organisational issues have been given a secondary thought Organisational stability and strength lead to the success of NGOs and, hence, these require a greater attention NGOs as a social force and its possible confrontation with social (social stratification and inequality) and political (political factionalism and paternalism) forces impinge on their operation, and these should have been discussed adequately. However, by presenting many case studies the book has posited NGOs as a viable force in addressing developmental issues. The editors have tried to maintain thematic coherence, but one feels that the chapters could have been better organised. Section I should have been strengthened with a few more articles on the conceptual ambiguity about NGOs, and the pertinent issues such as organisational sustainability, accountability, etc. Nevertheless, it is a useful addition to the literature on NGOs.

Biswamber Panda

Vinod Chandra (ed.): Construction and reconstruction of Indian youth Lucknow Circle for Youth and Child Research Cooperation in India, 2003, 254 pp, Rs 275 (hb)

The book under review consists of thirteen articles grouped under two parts besides the editor's 'Preface' elaborating the various meanings of 'youth' Considering that the contemporary society is known to be getting younger, as the youth population is growing, the issues addressed in the book are relevant to the times

Conceptually, the category of 'youth' has multiple dimensions depending upon the objective and the socio-cultural context of analysis All the same, the category of youth has been defined by the UNO and different countries have been using the concept applying different parameters, that is, biological (age) psychological (attitude) and sociological (role) In India, the parameter of age (16-34 years) is commonly used to define youth However, the fact remains that youth as a category continues to be controversial as far as sociological analysis goes. It becomes more complicated in a society like India, which is heterogeneous in all aspects. Although, youth as a category and social fact has existed throughout the ages, it has drawn the attention of social scientists only recently and more so during the 1990s, that is, in the wake of globalisation Keeping in mind the complex reality of socioeconomic and

cultural diversities, the editor has covered the various dimensions of youth, such as political, economic and social, besides sex and ethnicity

The first part of the book demonstrates the historical and political context with reference to the Indian youth, as to how the youth has been active in politics addressing national issues until the 1990s. However, these articles are descriptive and lack analysis. The article by Sahu, on anti-missile movement in Orissa, gives details of the role played by youth Reflecting sociologically, Vivek Kumar argues that there is need to further probe the process of shedding the stigmatised 'dalit youth' identity, especially in the absence of cultural capital

The papers in the second section deal with the socioeconomic dimensions of youth. The authors here portray the constraints and restrictions that have come to be imposed on youth by traditions, modernisation, education and media and thereby on values, roles and attitudes resulting in crisis. In the process of globalization, the youth has formed a different culture, described as a 'troubled'/'troublesome' generation. The paper on occupational aspirations among female youth demonstrates how even now the female youth face constraints in choosing a career. However, the authors neither give the sources of data nor indicate the universe of the study. Youth is considered as a potential resource for the country's development when its proportion exceeds one-third of the population. The new economic policy, globalisation and privatisation seem to be benefiting the urban middle-class—the English-educated youth—and the majority of youth—the rural, tribal, dalit, and minority—remain outside the focus of the new processes of transformation.

The title of this volume is apposite and attractive, however, the editor and the authors, in general, have not done justice to the theme. The approach to the issue seems to be superficial, lacking as it does a theoretical framework and conceptual analysis. All the same, considering the dearth of literature on the Indian youth, the book would be helpful as a starting point in the present complex situation of IT Revolution and globalisation.

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Yogendra Singh: Ideology and theory in Indian sociology Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications, 2004, 240 pp, Rs 495 (hb) ISBN 81-7033-831-X

Yogendra Singh's contention is that, Indian sociology, 'despite its deeper linkages with the theoretical and methodological traditions of the West,

has in the ideological and normative domains evolved successfully in its own discourse' While it remains to be seen what is meant by 'evolved successfully' on its own 'normative and ideological domains', this conclusion does not seem to be a significant departure from the conclusion that he had reached in his trend report on 'Social conditioning of Indian Sociology' published in the 1980s Does this imply that, even after twenty years that have passed between the two writings, Singh thinks that the 'cognitive impulse' for Indian sociology still comes from abroad? For an answer, we search the book, which is a collection of individual essays written at different points in time

The introduction and the first two essays that constitute nearly a half of the book deal with the complex relationship between ideologies of a period and the corresponding conceptual schemes. Karl Marx's notion of 'fetishism of commodities', for instance, exposed the nexus between neo-classical economics and the ideology of capitalism. If the post-Enlightenment developments fuelled classical sociological thought, the next phase was initiated by the intellectual introspection in the aftermath of the horrors of Nazism, where sociology, itself as an ideology, came under scrutiny. The third phase of sociological maturity, according to Singh, may be associated with the revival of phenomenology and structuralism, which displaced the notions of 'system' and 'actor' without denying them

The emergence of a sociological worldview, or a societal self-awareness among the intelligentsia influenced by formal sociological theories, according to Singh, has been a critical historical development. This sociological worldview has always been at odds with traditionalism and hierarchy. In fact, the affirmation of the ordinary, the marginalised and the oppressed has been, according to Singh, one of the most powerful ideas of modern society.

However, postmodern philosophies are sceptical about the idea of universality of reason and the emancipatory potential of sociology Moreover, the current transformation of the realities of space and time challenges the long-cherished sociological notions of family and community This necessitates, according to Singh, a focus on postmodernity as a distinctive phase in history, and not as a degraded form of modernity

Moving on to Indian sociology, Singh points out how the approaches are grounded in conceptual schemes rather than in formal, full-fledged theory. The theoretical orientations are metaphoric and do not quality as theory based on the principle of logical closure. More important in this context, however, is the epistemic tension between the Indian quest for its own sociological paradigm and the compulsions of the universalistic tendencies. The issues thrown up by the colonial encounter with the West

have occupied considerable research attention and the author sketches how nationalism, nation-building and development, neo-Marxist critiques of development and symbolic domains, in that sequence have provided ideological orientation to Indian sociology since its inception

Singh identifies four broad orientations in Indian sociology, roughly corresponding to the time periods 1952-60, 1960-65, 1965-70 and 1970-77. The philosophical theoretical orientation represented by the pioneers is set in the background of nationalism and the need to combat the evolutionary reductionist matrix in explaining Indian social realities. Radhakamal Mukherjee's synthetic approach involved an Eastern perspective of dialectics, while D.P. Mukherjee's Marxological approach looked at dialectics as interaction between the historical, cultural context and the modes of production A.K. Saran, on the other hand, called for a total rejection of sociology as a cultural alternative to the traditional worldview even in the West, leave alone Eastern societies. Here, Singh also outlines the legendary debate been Saran and Louis Dumont on sociology of India, the critical issues raised by which have not received due attention from Indian sociologists

The most remarkable effort in the culturological studies, according to Singh, is M N Srinivas's concept of sanskritisation based on reference group theory, as it opened up both historical and structural-analytical insights into Indian society. While the culturological studies were descriptive, structural theoretic studies on similar units of analysis like the village and religion were explanatory, involving a comparative element. But functional approaches in India, according to Singh, located the village and caste in a regional matrix and also studied the factions and their conflicts, thereby rendering the concept of a (closed) 'system' metaphorical rather than formal

The last chapter presents a highly general overview of the process of globalisation, without, however, offering sociological insights or data in supports of statements made. The book concludes with a call to address the issues raised by globalisation and glocalisation.

The sections on general sociology, especially the essay on the concept of man in sociology that is reproduced here, best represents Singh's analytical rigour and would be of value to those looking for an engaging Indian meta theory of Western sociology. The chapters on Indian sociology are more like a chronological trend report, they are not exhaustive as Singh's previous work on the same subject, and most of the points are repeated in the other essays. A deeper and serious probe into the arguments of Indian sociologists highlighted would have been insightful, warranting a conclusion different from the one Singh reached

in the 1980s In the end, we are left with the feeling of having been invited for a lunch, offered a rich fare of starters, but an inadequate meal!

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Yogesh Atal and Rajesh Mishra (eds.): Understanding the social sphere The village and beyond Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications, 2004, 322 pp, Rs 575 (hb) ISBN 81-7033-830-1

The volume under review is a collection of fourteen essays in honour of Professor Brij Raj Chauhan It begins with an affectionate presentation of Professor Chauhan's personal and intellectual saga as one of the pioneers of sociology in India A bibliography of works by Professor Chauhan is appended

Glancing through the contents, one is sure to conclude that the volume is a compilation of unrelated essays. The editors confess that, to bring out this volume within a short period of three months, the contributors were asked to submit articles that they were currently working on, or any of their previously published papers which in their view represented their very best. As the senior editor states, 'The book is like a Journal that has disjointed themes. I call this a bouquet. The contributing authors offer this bouquet to their teacher.', and he craves 'the indulgence of the readers to ignore its shortcomings, and to restrain from commenting on what has not been done'

Going by its sub-title, one should not think that the volume is mainly about the Indian village. Of the fourteen articles, only six have village as their empirical reference. The senior editor has written the lead article, which presents an analytical overview of the growth and development of village studies. Arguing that the village can be still a subject matter for sociology in India, he concludes with some sort of a moralistic note 'Giving up rural studies in favour of new fads and fashions in the profession is perhaps not a right thing to do. If rural sociology could flourish anywhere, it will be in places like India where the village is going to remain a key fact for quite some time'

TM Dak's article on the changing concerns of rural development in India is informative. The other articles focusing on the 'rural' deal with such themes as social mobility in rural areas (Giri Raj Gupta), the peasant and the farmer (A Satyanarayana), poverty alleviation (Hari Mohan Mathur), and caste, class and agrarian relations (Arvind Chauhan)

The remainder of the volume has articles on such diverse themes as the study of voting (Surendra K Gupta) and Islamic values and social stratification (Parvez A Abbassi) Rajesh Mishra's analytical article on the new middle-class is comprehensive in its scope. He raises the status of the term 'new middle-class' from a descriptive concept to an analytical construct useful in analysing contemporary social reality. There are two theoretical and methodological articles. Abha Chauhan's analysis of the feminist theories, and Anand Kashyap's critique of the usefulness of western perspectives in studying Indian social reality. Two articles—by P.A. Abbasi and M.S. Agwani—are contributions to minority studies

The diversity of the volume's focus reflects the divergent interests of Professor Chauhan's past students. It also shows how Professor Chauhan trespassed disciplinary boundaries and encouraged his students to venture into different directions. The volume is a welcome addition contributing to the intellectual biography of a pioneer of Indian sociology and it captures the formation of a field he cultivated through his own work and that of his students.

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INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Secretary's Report (2004)

Friends, it gives me great pleasure to present before you the Secretary's Report for the period January-December 2004. I wish to place on record my deep sense of gratitude to all the members for their constant encouragement and support during this period, and I look forward to receiving similar cooperation in future. In all modesty, I would say that our team of office bearers and members of the Managing Committee (MC) has done its best to serve the Indian Sociological Society (ISS) and to safeguard its long-term interests. I do not, however, claim that all our activities were without any shortcomings. I would personally apologise for any lapse and/or deficiency in carrying out my duties as the Secretary.

Before reporting on the main events of the year, on behalf of the General Body (GB) and the MC, first I would like to sincerely thank the late Professor R R Pande, Vice-Chancellor, D D U Gorakhpur University, Professor Sheo Bahal Singh, Organising Secretary, Professor Gopal Yadav, Professor V K Srivastav, and Professor Ved Prakash Mishra, Coorganising Secretaries for inviting the ISS to hold its XXX All India Sociological Conference (AISC) at D D U Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur on 27-29 December 2004 I also thank the present Vice-Chancellor Dr Arun Kumar for his active involvement in hosting the Conference The Organising Secretary Professor Sheo Bahal Singh and his colleagues have spared no effort in making the arrangements for the academic sessions as well as the comfortable stay of the delegates at Gorakhpur They have worked for the past several months, planned each detail and sought cooperation and support from everyone to ensure that the XXX AISC would be a grand success

The theme of the conference-'National policy on social sciences'-has great contemporary relevance. In two separate symposia, two subthemes-'National policy for the social sciences. Institutional dimensions of social science policy', and 'National policy for the social sciences. Policy considerations in the promotion of excellence in teaching and research'-have been discussed by invited scholars in great depth. In addition, a special symposium on 'Eastern UP Dilemmas of change in a border territory' was also arranged. This symposium was especially selected to highlight the changing profile of society, culture and institutions in Uttar Pradesh. It had a special significance as the ISS was

SOCIOLOGICAL BULLETIN, 54 (2), May-August 2005, Pp 300-307

organising the AISC in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh for the first time We are grateful to all the chairpersons and speakers of the three symposia for accepting our invitation and making their valuable presentations

M.N. Srinivas Memorial Lecture

You may recall that The M N Srinivas Memorial Lecture Series was instituted by the Society in 2001. This was made possible by The M N Srinivas Endowment Fund set up by the Society out of the contributions received from a group of former students of Professor Srinivas who bequeathed the entire royalties of their edited volumes (published in honour of Professor Srinivas) to the Society and a matching grant given by the Indian Council of Social Science Research. The First Lecture in this Series was delivered by Professor André Béteille on 'Hierarchical and competitive inequality' at the AISC held at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar in December 2001. The lecture was published in Sociological bulletin (51/1, March 2002)

Professor PC Joshi, former President of the Society, who had accepted the invitation to deliver the Second Lecture in the Series, could not deliver the lecture during the XXVIII AISC held at Kanpur in December 2002. He delivered the lecture on 'Between vision and reality Reflections on Hindi region', in the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi on 14 November 2003. The Third Lecture in this Series was delivered by Professor N.R. Sheth at the XXIX AISC held in Udaipur in December 2003. This lecture—'The field of labour'—has since been published in *Sociological bulletin* (53/2, May-August 2004). This year, Professor Leela Dube was invited to deliver the Fourth M.N. Srinivas Memorial. Lecture, and she has kindly accepted the invitation Unfortunately, due to her ill health, the lecture cannot be delivered during the AISC in Gorakhpur. She will deliver the lecture later at a place and time specified by the Society in consultation with her

The Professor M.N. Srinivas Memorial Prize for Young Sociologists

As you all know, The Professor M N Srinivas Endowment Fund has also enabled the Society to institute The M N Srinivas Memorial Prize consisting of a cash prize of Rs 1,000 and a certificate It is awarded every year to a young sociologist/social anthropologist for publishing the best paper in sociology/ social anthropology in any of the social science journals or edited volumes in English in India The Advisory Committee of the Endowment Fund acts as the selection/evaluation committee In 2001, the prize was awarded to Dr Rowena Robinson of the Indian

Institute of Technology (Bombay) and, in 2002, to Dr Nandini Sundar, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

I am indeed very happy to inform you that The MN Srinivas Endowment Committee has decided to increase the prize money from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 from 2003 onwards. However, in 2003, though ten entries were received for the prize, none of the papers measured up to the standards expected by the Committee. This year there were seventeen entries from fourteen authors, with three authors submitting two entries each. The Committee has decided to award this year's prize to Dr Amita Baviskar, Visiting Associate Professor, Cultural and Social Anthropology, Stanford University for her essay on 'States, communities and conservation. The practice of eco-development in the great Himalayan national park' (in V K. Saberwal and M. Rangarajan (eds.) Battles over nature. Science and the politics of conservation, Delhi Permanent Black, 2003)

The ISS Newsletter

During the year under report, two issues of the *ISS Newsletter* were published Besides the regular news and information about the profession, the June issue contained the details of the XXIX AISC, Research Committees (RCs) and their Conveners, and the Conference registration form The December issue included the Conference details, besides the regular features The feedback received from different members suggests that this has facilitated the participation of members both in the Conference and in RCs, as all relevant information had reached them well in advance

I take this opportunity to renew my appeal to all members of the Society to canvass advertisements for the *Newsletter* This will help us ease the financial burden on the Society substantially

Research Committees

If the impetus given to research is an indicator of positive growth, then ISS has every reason to be proud of the research activities of its members. The constitution of RCs by itself does not indicate academic advancement. Initially, the RCs appeared to be working at a snail's pace, but they have now gained momentum. As per the MC's decision, we have constituted a Committee to assess the role of the RCs since the time of their inception and advice on the steps to be taken for further improvement. The members of this Committee members are Professor.

T K Oommen, Professor B S Baviskar, Professor Aneeta Minocha, and the Secretary, ISS (Convener) The Committee, which met on 8 October 2004, provided valuable suggestions and revised the existing guidelines for more meaningful functioning of the RCs

It gives me a great sense of satisfaction to report that our review of the RCs indicates that most of them have performed well. With the growing involvement of members in their activities, the RCs are looking forward not only to consolidate their activities but also to undertake fresh initiatives. The Conveners of all RCs deserve to be applicated for their impressive and reassuring performance.

Sociological Bulletin

As per the MC's decision, the periodicity of *Sociological Bulletin* has increased from the previous two issues per volume to three issues per volume with effect from Volume 53 (2004) The sequence of the issues is as follows Issue No 1, January-April, Issue No 2, May-August, and Issue No 3, September-December

The efforts of Professor N Jayaram, Managing Editor of Sociological bulletin deserves special mention. He takes keen interest in improving the quality of the journal and bringing it out on time. It is to be noted that the September-December 2004 issue was in the hands of the members well before December, as early as in October itself. On behalf of the MC and on my own behalf, I take this opportunity to compliment Professor Jayaram for his dedicated service to the Society.

As per the decision of the GB meeting held at Kanpur on 19 December 2002, I would like to make an earnest appeal to those members who have not yet paid Rs 1,000 for meeting the postal expenses of the *Sociological bulletin* to kindly make this payment to the ISS office at the earliest

South Asia Workshop

the first ever effort of its kind, the ISS in collaboration with the Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka and the Department of Sociology, University of Pune is organising a South Asia Workshop on the theme 'The state of sociology Issues of relevance and rigour'.

The idea of holding the Workshop arose out of the initiative taken by the ISA National Associations Committee represented by Professor Sujata Patel, Vice-President, ISA (NA) The ISA endorsed our application and provided a token grant of US \$ 4,000 This enabled us to approach the ICSSR, the Ford Foundation, the UGC and the Planning Commission for financial support. The composition of the Organising Committee, as approved by the Managing Committee at its meeting held on 2 April 2004, included the office bearers of the ISS and the Managing Editor, *Sociological bulletin*, Professor Siri Hetige, Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Professor Sujata Patel and Professor S M. Dahiwale of the Department of Sociology, University of Pune, and Dr. Ravinder Kaur of the Indian Institute of Technology (Delhi) (Convenor)

The Workshop is being held at Hotel Raj Hans of the Haryana Tourism Corporation, Surajkund, just outside Delhi, on 23-25 February 2005 The objective is to provide the scope for South Asian sociologists/ social anthropologists to share their assessment of the state of our discipline in their respective countries. We need to urgently debate on the theoretical, methodological and substantive issues that confront our discipline in our respective countries, not via the West, but through firsthand scholar-to-scholar interactions. This Workshop will give us an opportunity to explore how we, as sociologists, have been dealing with what kinds of issues, with what effect, what factors come in the way of our professional excellence, and how we can circumvent them through regional cooperation We hope and wish that the Workshop leads us to form a South Asia Sociological Association which would facilitate the regular networking of sociologists in the region and also provide scope for conferences, seminars, workshops and collaborative research As many as twenty-five scholars from South Asian nations have already accepted our invitation. In addition, we are expecting a few sociologists from outside South Asia who will travel on their own cost

FCRA Registration

You will be happy to learn that the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has granted registration to the Society under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 (vide registration numl 231660528 dated 15 December 2004) for educational purposes This w facilitate the Society to receive foreign contributions and grants Those conversant with the formalities know how difficult it is to get this registration

Golden Jubilee Volumes

The ISS is pursuing the publication of the Golden Jubilee Volumes under the able series editorship of Professor B S Baviskar As reported earlier, seven proposals submitted by six of our colleagues were selected to compile and edit volumes on various themes. Some senior colleagues were requested to be academic advisors to the editors in their respective fields. The editors and the academic advisors selected ten to fifteen articles from the earlier issues of *Sociological bulletin* and each editor has written a comprehensive introduction to the respective volume. A 'Series note' by Professor Baviskar is also included in all the volumes Sage Publications India Private Limited, New Delhi is publishing these volumes

I am happy to report that, of the above, Sage had brought out the first three volumes—Sociology of gender, Urbanization in India and Sociology of religion in India—and they were released by the Honourable Vice-President of India Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat during the inaugural function of the XXIX AISC in Udaipur on 21 December 2003. The fourth volume in this series—The Indian disapora edited by N. Jayaram—was out from the press early this year. This volume was formally released at the inaugural session of the XXX AISC in Gorakhpur. The work on the other three volumes—Tribal communities and social change edited by Pariyaram M. Chacko, The family in India edited by Tulsi Patel and On civil society edited by N. Jayaram— is progressing well.

I wish to thank Professor Baviskar for pursuing the project of the Golden Jubilee Volumes, and also for his valuable suggestions in running the Society's affairs

Regional Associations

Although several regional sociological associations are functioning in different parts of the country, only seven are affiliated with the ISS They are Marathi Samajshastra Parishad, Uttar Pradesh Samaj Shastra Parishad, North-West Indian Sociological Association, Kerala Sociological Society, Sociological Association of West Bengal, Mangalore Sociology Association, and Rajasthan Sociological Association I request the office bearers of all the regional associations to affiliate their association with the ISS

In General

Friends, the Society still continues to be under financial stiain due to mounting maintenance and printing costs Enlisting new life members and subscribers to the *Sociological bulletin* is the need of the hour Even under these financial constraints, it has been decided to increase the number of issues of the *Bulletin* from two to three This will naturally

result in an additional expenditure of Rs one lakh per year. We must mobilise additional resources to meet this additional expenditure

Although as a part of marketing the *Bulletin* we have printed a subscription form and sent it to various universities and research institutions, the response has not been very encouraging I feel that with personal and concerted follow-up at the level of universities, post-graduate departments, affiliated colleges and research institutes it will be possible to register more paid subscribers. I would, therefore, appeal to all the members to make special efforts to increase the number of subscribers to the *Bulletin*. Apart from being a financial strategy and balancing act, such an attempt to popularise and enlarge the circulation of the *Bulletin* will improve the visibility of our professional output

I would like to place on record our sincere gratitude to the Organising Committee of the Udaipur Conference for reimbursing the travel expenses of the MC members and RC Convenors for participating in the Udaipur Conference. This has reduced the financial burden of the Society to a great extent. I hope that the future organisers of the Conference will be inspired by this gesture. I am glad to inform you that the Institute of Social Development, Udaipur is our first institutional member.

After the last GB meeting, held in Udaipur on 29 December 2003, ninety-eight life members and forty-five ordinary/student members have joined the Society This is a record number in the history of the ISS

Friends, since we last met in December 2003, we have lost five distinguished life members Professor S P Punalekar (Surat), who was an MC member during 1997-2003, Dr M L Sharma (Haryana Agricultural University, Hissar), Mr Kishore Premchand (Mumbai), Professor R B Bilawar (Aurangabad) and Dr S Sampangiramaiah (Bangalore) We mourn their sad demise, pay our respects to the departed souls and convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families

I would like to place on record my sincere gratitude to Professor Partha Nath Mukherji, President of the Society He is a man of great virtues and values. He inspires everyone with his hard work and commitment for strengthening the ISS. At every stage of my association with him, his constant encouragement and wholehearted support has been a source of great inspiration. I also thank Professor U.B. Bhoite, Treasurer, and MC members for their wholehearted cooperation and valuable support.

Before I close, I wish to record my gratitude to Dr George Mathew, Director, Institute of Social Sciences for his willing cooperation in running the office of the Society I also thank Shri Krishnan Namboodiri for efficiently managing the office of the Society My thanks are also due to Shri S S Arumugam, Ms Vidya, Shri Madhu Nair, Shri Amrendra Kumar and all other staff of the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi for their valuable help and support in running the Society's office smoothly and efficiently

Jacob John Kattakayam Secretary

Pofessor M N Srinivas Memorial Prize 2005

Indian Sociological Society
Institute of Social Sciences
8 Nelson Mandela Road, Vasant Kunj
New Delhi 110 070

The Professor M N Srinivas Endowment Fund was jointly set up by the Indian Sociological Society and the Indian Council of Social Science Research in 2001. This Fund has instituted a prize for young sociologists/social anthropologists for publishing the best sociological/social anthropological paper in any of the social science journals/edited volumes, in English, in India. The prize will carry a sum of Rs 2,000.

Papers published during 01 January 2002 - 31 December 2004 are eligible for consideration. The authors, who are life members or ordinary members of the Society with at least one year's standing, will be eligible for the contest. The author must be 40 years or less in age on 31 December 2004. If the paper is co-authored, all the authors must be 40 years or less in age on 31 December 2004. The authors will submit only one paper for consideration.

A reprint of the paper along with photocopies of the title page of the journal/edited volume and age proof must reach the office of Indian Sociological Society on or before 31 August 2005. The typewritten/handwritten/computer print-out manuscript will not be accepted. Besides the authors, other scholars are also welcome to bring suitable papers to the notice of the selection committee for consideration.

Books Received

(January-March 2005)

- Allan, Kenneth 2005 Explorations in classical sociological theory. Seeing the social world. Thousand Oaks, California. Pine Forge Press (An Imprint of Sage Publications).
- Bagchi, Jasodhara (ed.) 2005 The changing status of women in West Bengal, 1970-2000 The challenge ahead. New Delhi. Sage Publications
- Banerjee, Paula, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Samir Kumai Das (eds.) 2005

 Internal displacement in South Asia The relevance of the UN's guiding principles

 New Delhi Sage Publications
- Biswas, Prasenjit. 2005 The postmodern controversy Understanding Richard Roity, Jacques Deriida and Jurgen Habermas Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications
- Booth, Gregory D 2005 Brass baja Stories from the world of Indian wedding bands New Delhi Oxford University Press
- Chacko, Pariyaram M (ed) 2005 Tribal communities and social change (Themes in Indian sociology, Vol 5) New Delhi Sage Publications
- Crossley, Nick 2005 Key concepts in critical social theory London Sage Publications
- Dahiwale, S M (ed) 2005 Understanding Indian society The non-Brahmanic perspective Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications
- Desai, Murli 2004 Methodology of progressive social work education Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications
- Gill, Rajesh (ed) 2004 State, market and civil society Issues and interface Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications
- Giri, Ananta Kumar (ed) 2005 Creative social research Rethinking theories and methods New Delhi Vistaar Publications
- Giri, Ananta Kumar 2005 Reflections and mobilizations Dialogues with movements and voluntary organizations New Delhi Sage Publications
- Gorringe, Hugo 2005 Untouchable citizens Dalit movements and democratisation in Timil Nadu (Cultural subordination and the dalit challenge, Vol 4) New Delhi Sage Publications
- Guilmoto, Christophe Z and S Irudaya Rajan (eds.) 2005 Fertility transition in South India New Delhi Sage Publications
- Jain, LC (ed) 2005 Decentialisation and local governance Essays for George Mathew New Delhi Orient Longman
- Jejeebhoy, Shireen J (ed.) 2004 Looking back, looking forward A profile of sexual and reproductive health in India Jaipur and New Delhi Rawat Publications
- Jenks, Chris 2005 Subculture The fragmentation of the social London Sage Publications
- Kumar, Krishna 2005 Political agenda of education A study of colonialist and nationalist ideas (Second edition) New Delhi Sage Publications
- Maharatna, Arup 2005 Demographic perspectives on India's tribes New Delhi Oxford University Press
- Nair, Janaki 2005 The promise of the metropolis Bangalore's twentieth century New Delhi Oxford University Press
- Qadri, S M Afzal 2005 Ahmad Siddique's Criminology Problems and prospects (Fifth edition) Lucknow Eastern Book Company

Guidelines for Contributors

- 1 Sociological Bulletin welcomes original articles Articles (not exceeding 8,000-10,000 words) must be typed on one side of the paper, double-spaced, with wide margins on all four sides. An abstract (not exceeding 100-120 words) must accompany the article
- 2 In the first instance, send only the hard copy of the typescript (two copies) If the article is accepted for publication, the contributor(s) will be required to send the soft copy of the article either as an E-mail attachment or in a floppy/compact disk. For E-mail attachments, the preferred format is < rtf>, for floppy/compact disks, the preferred word-processing format is Microsoft Word or WordPerfect for Windows
- 3 Within the text, adopt the author-date method of citation minus the comma for example, (Lobo 2002) If more than one work of an author is cited separate the years of publication with a comma (Pandey 1996, 1999) Separate the page numbers of citations by a colon (Uberoi 2002–264) and hyphenate the inclusive numbers (Uberoi 2002–264-65) When more than one author is cited, the entries should be chronological with works of different authors separated by a semicolon (Omvedt 1990, Hasan 1994, Mayaram 1997) For co-authored works, cite both names (Jayal and Pai 2001), for works authored by three or more authors use 'et al' after the first name (Patel et al 2002) If a citation is repeated within a paragraph without intervening citations use Ibid instead of repeating the author's name again and provide the relevant page number(s) (Ibid 32) If gazetteers, reports and works of governmental organisations and other institutions are cited, mention the name of the organisation/ institution sponsoring the publication in the citation, fully spelt out at its first occurrence (Government of India 2003), and use its abbreviation/acronym in subsequent citations (GOI 2003)
- 4 Give separately the bibliographic details of all works cited in the article under References in the following sequence (a) Article the name(s) of the author(s) the year of publication title of the article (within single inverted commas), the name of the journal (italicised) and the volume number the issue number, and the beginning and ending page numbers (b) Chapter in an edited work or compilation the name(s) of the author(s), the year of publication title of the chapter (within single inverted commas), the name(s) of the editor(s)/compiler(s), title of the book (italicised) the beginning and ending page numbers of the chapter, place of publication, and the name of the publisher (c) Book the name(s) of the author(s), the year of publication, title of the book (italicised), place of publication, and the name of the publisher. The listing in References must follow the alphabetical order of the last name of the (first) author. For illustrations, see any recent issue of the Bulletin.
- 5 Sociological Bulletin follows the endnote pattern. Serialise all explanatory notes in the sequence in which they are referred to in the text (using numbered superscripts) and place them at the end of the text under Notes, but before References. Endnotes must not be used for bibliographic purposes.
- 6 Tables, charts, maps, figures, etc are to be placed separately at the end of the article Number these serially, with appropriate titles/captions Refer to them in the text by their number-Table 5 Figure 2, Map 1, etc -and not by their location-for example, the above table, the figure below, etc
- 7 Cite sentences or words taken from other works with single quotation marks, use double quotation marks only within quotations. Separate quotations exceeding fifty words from the text and indent them on the left. Unless the entire sentence is part of the quotation, the punctuation must remain outside the quotation marks.
- 8 Use British, rather than American spellings (labour, not labor, programme, not program) Similarly, use 's' rather than z', in ise', ising', isation' words Authors have latitude as regards italicisation, but italicisation needs to be consistent in the article
- 9 Write numerals between one and ninety-nine in words and 100 and above in figures. However the following are to be in figures only distance 3 km age 32 years old, percentage 64 percent, century 20th century, and years 1990s.
- 10 Contributors are required to provide on a separate sheet their name, designation, official address and E-mail ID. Only articles which have not been published earlier or which are not being considered for publication elsewhere will be entertained. A declaration to this effect must be included in the covering letter.

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Special Issue on South Asia

Guest Editors N. Jayaram, Ravinder Kaur, Partha N. Mukherji

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INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Journal of the Indian Sociological Society

Volume 54, Number 3

September-December 2005

Special Issue on South Asia The State of Sociology: Issues of Relevance and Rigour

Guest Editors N. Jayaram, Ravinder Kaur and Partha N. Mukherji

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Sociology in South Asia: Indigenisation as Universalising Social Science

Partha N. Mukherji

Dear friends from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, our dear friend from South Africa, Tina Uys, Professor Staffan Lindberg, our dear friend from Sweden representing the SASNET, Professor Sin Hettige and Professor S M. Dahiwale, our co-sponsors, dear Indian colleagues, a very warm welcome to you all

I would like to believe that I am welcoming you to a momentous meeting of minds of the sociologists of South Asia Whether we make history of this occasion will depend on all of us who are assembled here this morning We should analyse and introspect why it has taken us this long to feel the strong urge to get together Having assembled for this Workshop, should we not figure out how we can turn this great opportunity into institutionalising an enduring organisation? We meet here with mutual respect for each other and conscious of our sensitivities I would like our deliberations to take the form of free and frank discussions and debates that follow the norms of scientific temper - agreeing, disagreeing only to search for an agreed conclusion, even failing to agree, or agreeing to disagree All done in the genuine spirit of a search for truth for which all science ultimately stands. Ours is an exercise in honest introspection into our state of the discipline at a critical moment in history, when transformative changes are sweeping our society, polity and economy We need urgently to gain from each other and advance the cause of an indigenously routed search for the universals of sociology and social science, so that through social science we are able to serve our people to move in the direction of a just and fair society

Through a historical accident, far too long we have remained separated We have sought to understand ourselves and about each other via a sociology and social science that has mainly developed in the West. This is not surprising, as 'both the physical and the social sciences — in the form they are institutionalised — had their origins in the problems and prospects that accompanied the Industrial Revolution and the concurrent evolution of the modern western nation state' (Mukherji 2005–156). The institutionalisation of science (physical and social) took place generally with the industrial revolution (with European Enlightenment rejecting divine authority and establishing reason and rationality as the basis of valid knowledge). However, it was the French Revolution, as Immanuel.

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Wallerstein points out, that signalled a *cultural* upheaval that compelled the western countries to recognise that

[the] pressure for political and social transformation had gained an urgency and a legitimacy that could not easily be contained any longer simply by proclaiming theories about a supposedly natural order of social life. There was not only space for, but a deep social need for, what we have come to call social science (Wallerstein 1997b 8)

Auguste Comte, in his Cours de Philosophie Positive (1830), sought to reconstruct social order through the 'positive' and 'exact' science of sociology (or social physics) free from all other modes of explanation like theology or metaphysics. The discipline of sociology emerged out of the forty years of intellectual anarchy that prevailed following the French Revolution. The grand vision of sociology was to recreate a new society Sociology, therefore, in its ancestry, is linked with the solutions to problems thrown up by the industrial revolution as well as the urge to recreate a new society. I would like to emphasise that this vision still remains the bulwark of our discipline.

We need to keep in mind that the western construction of the social sciences was replicated through European colonisation in the rest of the world It is, therefore, perfectly understandable that the paradigms that originated in encounters with problems following the industrialisation of the West, and colonisation, tended to predominate the substantive concerns of the postcolonial countries We not only inherited the British western university system, but also European or the American influences largely conditioned our courses, curricula and research agendas Ramkrishna Mukherjee has described the transition from the pioneers of Indian sociology to the modernisers The former, while not losing sight of the founding fathers of sociology (Comte, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Pareto and the rest) during the twilight period of transfer of power from imperial rule, 'were more India-centred and self consciously "Indian" (stalics added, 1979 28) They were abstracting the universals out of the founding fathers but attempting to find out if they could be contextualised in the Indian situation. The latter took over with a tacit or explicit acceptance of the received paradigm of western modernisation in which pragmatism prevailed over theory formation (*Ibid* 50)

It is generally accepted that Talcott Parsons' pattern variables provided the universal model of modernisation for nearly two decades following World War II, until it began to be strongly contested ¹ However, the linkage between western modernity and sociology still persists very strongly This can be highlighted, illustratively, in the perceptions of two distinguished European sociologists of our times. For Anthony

Giddens, sociology is about 'institutions and modes of life brought into being' by 'the massive set of social changes emanating first of all from Europe (and which today have become global in scope) creating modern social institutions' (1987: 25). His basic position does not seem to have undergone much change.² Piotr Sztompka, the Polish sociologist, with a sense of legitimate pride observes, 'Sociology, like so many other things, is a European invention....It provided self-understanding of the triumphant modernity and gave intellectual bearings to experience of rapid and fundamental transition towards entirely new economic, political and cultural order' (Nedelmann and Sztompka 1993: 1) Five years later, he was constrained to introduce concepts such as *fake* and *forced* modernity³ in order to characterise and explain the collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe

Undoubtedly, considerable amount of *rigour* went into our researches in postcolonial India to produce significant contributions in sociology and social anthropology (which were defined, more or less, as one and the same). Caste and tribal institutions and systems, through sheer mertia from colonial times, found the pride of place in sociological academia. Marxist models of agrarian class dialectics sought to oppose the primacy of caste in the explanation of social change. Village studies proliferated and worked out their linkages with rural community development. Western paradigms, by and large, guided our intellectual inquiries, and provided the basis for contestations on ideological and theoretical grounds Those social scientists seeking to steer a path cautious of western ethnocentric bias could not influence the course that the social sciences took.

It is significant that from the late 1960s till the mid-1980s there was intense debate over the importation and relevance of the western social sciences, Prominent critiques included C.T. Kurien (1968), A C Espiritu (1968), Kikuo Yamaoka (1968), S.C. Dube (1978), John Samy (1978), and P.L. Bennagen (1979), Yogesh Atal (1981, 190-92) ably captures the mood and temper of the times of these and other scholars However, it was left to Syed Hussein Alatas, the Malaysian sociologist, to conceptualise the 'captive mind' to capture the phenomenon It was, according to him, 'the product of higher institutions of learning, either at home or abroad, whose way of thinking is dominated by western thought in an imitative and uncritical manner' (italics added), it is 'uncreative and incapable of raising original problems'; 'incapable of devising analytical method independent of current stereotypes', 'incapable of separating the particular from the universal in science and thereby properly adapting the universally valid corpus of scientific knowledge to the particular local situation', 'fragmented in outlook', 'alienated from the major issues of sociology'; 'alienated from its own national tradition, if it exists, in the field of intellectual pursuit'; 'is unconscious of its own captivity and the conditioning factors making it what it is', 'is not amenable to an adequate quantitative analysis but it can be studied by empirical observation', and it 'is a result of western dominance over the rest of the world' (italics added, 1974 691)

The concept of the 'captive mind' did explain the state of sociology (and the social sciences) in the early decades following our independence We should accept the fact that well researched powerful concepts (adequate or inadequate) are bestowed with the power of knowledge A classic illustration of this is the politically volatile concept of the 'nation' (which is of western pedigree), as equal to ethnicity (as later conceptualised) Such is the power of this concept that in our historical experience it contributed to the subdivision of our subcontinent When, in 1937, Mohammad Ali Jinnah proclaimed with genuine concern that

Muslim India cannot accept any constitution which must necessarily result in Hindu majority government. Mussalmans are a nation according to any definition of nation and they must have their homelands, their territory and their states. We wish our people to develop to the fullest our spiritual, cultural, economic social and political life in a way that we think best and in consonance with our own ideals and according to the genius of our people (italics added, cited in Desai 1976 416)

he was not wrong, for, he was only articulating a well-defined western concept of the nation Gandhi's response is relevant even today to the discourse on the nation-state, which is no less relevant for all countries, including our South Asian fraternity Gandhi observed

We are not two nations We in India have a common culture In the North, Hindi and Urdu are understood by both Hindus and Moslems In Madras, Hindus and Moslems speak Tamil, and in Bengal they speak Bengali and neither Hindi nor Urdu When communal riots break out, they are always provoked by incidents over cows and by religious processions That means that it is our superstitions that create the trouble and not our separate nationalities (cited in *Ibid* 419)

Much earlier, as opposed to the narrow mono-cultural western concept of the nation — as comprising a people with a single language and culture within a defined territorial political space — Gandhi in, close wavelength with Tagore, took a broad *civilisational* view of the nation He observed

The English have taught us that we were not one nation before and that it will require centuries before we become one nation. This is without

foundation We were one nation before they came to India It was because we were one nation that they were able to establish one kingdom Subsequently they divided us (1921 31)

In fact, after the founding of Pakistan, the Quai-de-Azam wished for a secular, culturally plural, democratic nation-state, which was closer to Gandhi than to the British While discussing the nation-state, one of the most contentious Eurocentric concepts, which continues to plague the world, particularly the developing postcolonial countries, I have argued elsewhere that

Gandhi contested the Euro-centric normative definition of the nation-state, by extrapolating 'civilisation' in place of the 'ethnic' in formulating the concept of the Indian nation. The civilisational base refers to that enduring, variegated complex of thoughts, beliefs, ideas and idea systems, art and artefact, social, economic, political and cultural institutions, cumulating over a long period of time, to which an ever-growing number of distinctive cultures have been contributing and drawing with a sense of fulfilment. The individual contributions enriched and sustained a civilisation greater than the sum of its contributors. In this sense, Gandhi is a precursor of the alternative theorising on the nation-state, which replaces ethno-nationalism with civic-secular nationalism (see Mukherji 2004b, see also Mukherji 1999 56-57)

The 'captive mind' syndrome operated in India with startling consequences The communal fratricidal frenzy that ripped the subcontinent and led to one of largest transfer of populations in history evoked hardly any notice by us, the linguistic agitations that conflagrated in the 1950s leading to doomsday prophecies by western scholars were not considered subject matter for sociology, the insurgent unrest in the north-east remained unattended for long, and caste inequalities overshadowed poverty concerns 8 I recall, when I was doing my PhD field research on the Sarvodaya Gramdan movement (1962-63), I, as a novitiate scholar, found a 'golden' opportunity to discuss with one of our senior and venerated scholars. He showed keen interest in my work and even encouraged me, but ended up remarking 'It is very interesting work, but it is not sociological research!' It is equally the case, that yet another scholar of parallel eminence considered my research as non-conformist and creative, and produced the excitement that made me complete my work with a sense of satisfaction Subsequently, the study of social movements acquired a centrality in sociology when western social science defined it as the subject matter of sociology Had Indian sociologists responded to the societal crises of our times, as the Europeans did when they were confronted with the growing problems of industrialisation, I wonder where our sociology would have been today. The lead given by the pioneers were overtaken by the paradigmatic power of social science crafted in the West

The situation has considerably changed since then Social scientists have entered into a critical mode. But our debates and discourses still take place largely within the contesting paradigms generated in the West Now, more than earlier, substantive areas of concern have become more relevant, whether it is social justice, ecology and environment, gender concerns, liberalisation, globalisation, hunger, humans rights, and so on Even these areas of concern, more often than not, registered with us via the West Occasionally, contestations are taking place questioning western models. What seems to be lacking conspicuously is the rigour of empirically grounded research in these contestations, barring, of course, honourable exceptions

A serious point to ponder over is the severe decline in problem-oriented academic research, on the one hand, and an inundation by sumptuously funded, sponsored, client-oriented, evaluation research and consultancy, on the other The liberalisation of trade, enabling the formation and liberal entry of transnational and multinational corporates into countries of the world, is paralleled by an aggressive externally induced construction of civil society, particularly in the developing countries, as the hallmark of western model of democratisation and development process. This has been the single most important factor distracting trained social scientists from undertaking basic and applied research, even as they get sucked into the fold of lucrative evaluation research authenticating the precious work being done by externally funded civil society organisations – the so-called NGOs

Let us do a brief stocktaking Krishna Hachhethu significantly remarks that since the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990 (ironically at the present moment there is a relapse into monarchical authoritarianism) research in the university is getting neglected with the appearance of a new 'talking culture not working culture, and no research without money The quest for money has led the TU [Tribhuvan University] social scientists to work more in other places, mainly on private campuses, NGOs and INGOs, even at the cost of their individual responsibility/assignment in the university' (2002 3635) Akbar Zaidi concedes that a few NGOs in Pakistan are producing better quality research, but even so such research is 'related to their line of work and expertise, and is often project specific Most NGOs produce information [W]hat goes in the name of "research" in NGOs is than do research highly questionable' (2002 3649-50) Momtaz Uddin Ahmed commenting on the Bangladesh scenario is even more explicit. He points out.

Contrary to expectations, the research output produced by the academic community has, on the whole, been inadequate and, in many cases, of poor quality. The reasons for this dismal performance are quite evident. Most of these researches are busy in providing consultancy services to the donors, NGOs, or, government organisations in exchange for higher recommendations, and thus neglect serious academic research which does not pay directly or as well as the consultancy jobs (1997–112)

A very important implication of sponsored, evaluative research is that these research agendas are set externally by global funding agencies and the market, with little option for any alteration in its research framework or design (Mukherji 1998 23)

Partha Chatterjee, along with a team of social scientists from the South Asian region, reporting on a research sponsored by the Social Science Research Council of the United States of America, observes, 'Across the region, in all countries, we heard from social scientists that while it was becoming impossible to do research without projects sponsored by international funding agencies, these projects rarely produced results of any serious academic significance' (2002 3610) He goes on to warn that if research funding for academic research is curtailed drastically it 'would actually lead to a situation where fundamental theoretical research would be confined to the first world universities and third world researchers would be sent, out to the fields only to do the empirical policy-oriented research' (*Ibid*)

As I have observed elsewhere, 'This in effect means, the first world will develop and perfect the paradigms and prescriptions of development, whilst the client developing world will engage in nuts-and-bolts-research to ensure conformity to the first world specifications of what constitutes development' (Mukherji 2004a 30)

The question – 'whether the social sciences that originated in the West, and that are indigenous to the West, are necessarily universal for the rest?' – is still relevant epistemologically Concepts such as the 'nation', 'secular', 'modernity', 'western democracy', 'human rights', 'sustainable development', and a host of others need to be properly interrogated. In the words of Wallerstein, 'if social science is to make any progress in the twenty-first century, it must overcome the Eurocentric heritage which has distorted its analyses and its capacity to deal with problems of the contemporary world' (1997a 22)

It is time that we *expanded* our horizons of existing knowledge and understanding of our societal realities by examining and exploring the largely so-far-neglected, native, indigenous sources of thinking and knowledge about social reality and its dynamics. To accomplish this we need to seriously engage in a multilateral sharing of research and

teaching experiences in each other's societies to get to know one's own society better and more efficiently Furthermore, we need to go on increasing our knowledge in an ever-widening comparative frame involving other societies. While contextualising of social phenomena is of prime importance, it is even more important to be able to move beyond the context in generalising for a larger social space – from the particular to the universal. Otherwise, we will tend to remain context-bound.

. Is this idea of universalisation of the social sciences taken care of if social scientists have the necessary autonomy to do their research and teaching old If the locus of choice and control is in our hands, does it make the proposition of indigenisation redundant? Nothing indeed should matter, as Satish Saberwal observes, as long as there is goodness of fit between choice of theories and concepts and the evidence being considered Social Scientists in India have not had any complaint on the exercise of their autonomy in the pursuit of social science, to the best of my knowledge. Nor have their concepts and theories necessarily lacked goodness of fit with the explanation of substantive problems. How then has Indian sociology defaulted on the substantive problems of poverty, partition, communalism, linguistic separatism, the gender question, and so on, when these were staring all Indians on their faces? The problem, therefore, is not of 'autonomy' but of the 'captive mind'. This is where the concept of indigenisation as a process of generating relevant concepts or providing a testing ground for examining the goodness of fit of concepts generated elsewhere, including in the non-western world, becomes important

The questions that need to be seriously addressed are

- 1 Are the realities of the non-western developing world often getting *refracted* when perceived through the prism of concepts and theories generated in/by the West?
- Are such perceptions of realities introducing new confusions and contradictions, dependencies and asymmetries, new sources of deprivations and conflicts?
- and conflicts?

 3 Are the non-western societies, in the process, getting induced to reconstruct their reality consistent with the logic of the dominant western paradigms, with unanticipated consequences having critical implications for their social development?
- 4 Is it not urgent that the non-western developing and the least developed countries now focus on these questions and respond *indigenously*, that is, by anchoring themselves more firmly in their historical-contextual realities and wisdom? (Mukherji 2004 a 32)

If the answer lies in an *indigenous* approach, much in the same way that the West responded to industrial revolution, then the next pertinent

question is, 'Is *indigeneity* in principle, compatible with the criterion or goal of *universality* in social science?' As I view it, the major assumptions underlying the indigenisation of the social sciences are the following

- Indigenisation is not to be confused with parochialisation of social science. Science and parochial knowledge are incommensurate. The process of indigenising social science has to be consistent with the attempt to generalise beyond the context to an ever-widening social space reaching out to the universal.
- 2 Just as concepts and theories emanating from the West can and may have relevance beyond the West, likewise, concepts and theories originating from contexts other than the West, can and may have relevance for the West It is only when knowledge generation from different societal and cultural contexts contributes to the pool of social knowledge that social science will be moving genuinely towards its proper universalisation
- 3 Since theory and action are inextricably linked, it is expected that action which issues out of indigenous knowledge will release processes of *change* with *continuity* more consistent with the system's own propensity for change, thereby making it more probable for development and change to be enduring
- 4 One of the important assumptions underlying indigenisation is that social reality is best comprehended if it is analysed, inferred, explained, interpreted with the help of conceptual abstractions that are either deeply rooted in its structure, culture and historical process, but not limited to these, or are sufficiently efficient in capturing the complex realities, no matter if they are formulated in contexts other than their own Such contextualisation of conceptual and theoretical formulations, it is contended, makes for a more precise grasp of social reality and its dynamics (Ibid 33)
- A generally held assumption is that science/social science is the real and the only authentic source of knowledge. It is time we recognised that although knowledge authenticated by science is the major contributor to knowledge, philosophy and religion, language and literary expressions of reality, folk wisdom accumulated through the ages, and other expressions of social reality are all important sources of knowledge in their own right and must feed into the social sciences for their enrichment and greater relevance (Mukherji 2005)

Thus, there are three different levels of abstractions at which the indigenisation of social sciences can be comprehended (i) when the abstractions are original and creatively conceived, (ii) when it is an innovative mix of existing paradigms and blending of intuitive, creative grasp of social reality; and (iii) when concepts and theories originating

elsewhere pass the *indigeneity-generalisability test*, that is, if the *general* explained the *particular*, efficiently. This is the process of indigenisation of concepts and theories developed elsewhere but having a universal import (Mukherji 2004a 34)

To produce knowledge that is rooted in the indigenous, it is important that we engage seriously with knowledge emanating from the West and elsewhere in a comparative frame. I can better communicate what I mean by commenting on André Béteille's important perception of this problematic

Today at the close of the twentieth century it is impossible to practice sociology as a serious academic discipline without drawing on the vast reservoir of sociological concepts, methods and theories created by scholars over the last hundred years Surely there is room for an Indian perspective, or better, several Indian perspectives, but to be viable, they have to address themselves to society and culture everywhere, and not just to Indian society and culture (1996 18)

Béteille, quite justifiably, is against a parochial approach, and for universality in social science. However, his perspective gives the impression that,

implicit in this formulation is the view that any perspective, western or non-western, to be universally valid, will need to draw on the 'vast reservoir of sociological concepts, methods and theories', created almost exclusively by western scholars in the process of sorting out the problems that the West faced, or the agenda that the West pursued (*Ibid*)

If I rephrase Béteille, my point will become clearer Surely, there is a western perspective, or better, several western perspectives, but to be viable, they have to address themselves to societies and cultures everywhere and not just western societies and cultures or their interests (italics added, Mukherji 2004a 25)

In conclusion, I would like to underscore five important points *First*, sociology and social anthropology have largely remained *ideographic* in their approach, confined to micro-level realities, and often restricted to descriptive or narrative forms. While the significance and importance of ideographic studies cannot be underestimated for their contribution to insights and interpretative understanding of meanings and symbolisms, it is time that we moved into important *nomothetic* levels of macro-level studies and generalisations of regional, national and international-global scope. Unless we do this, we will not count much in the shaping of policy interventions for desired change.

Second, we must be able to assess the constantly changing shifts in the new configurations of relevant issues, and engage in research that will capture the phenomena of rapid social changes in an era of globalisation driven by an irreversible technology. The phenomenon of corporatisation of the globe, its consequences for better or for worse for the vast majority of the people in our region, needs to be addressed squarely

Third, unless our studies maintain the rigour of methodology, it is unlikely that we will be taken seriously, even if we are keyed to relevant research issues. Quite often, we use methods and techniques following our own training. Therefore, if one is trained in social anthropology, it is likely that participant observation, case study method, etc. will be the accepted methods of study. If one is into survey techniques, it is likely that questionnaires and schedules will be used to quantify responses from one-shot interviews. The important point that is often not adequately realised is that the problem of research should determine the logic of its inquiry. Then the choice from available methods, tools and techniques, as well as required innovations in methodology will fall into place.

Fourth, basic and applied research provides the foundation on which the edifice of policies and social action are erected what kinds of skills to impart, what is to be the substance of relevant training, what needs to be advocated, what kinds of capacities and capabilities ought to be built, how wealth can be created and distributed, how people could learn to self-govern, how social justice against discrimination can be meted, how the underclass can improve its life-chances in the market, how the people can participate in the decisions that affect them — in short, how social scientists could engage in formulations that would be commensurate with the objective realities of existing inequalities and social development

Finally, we need, more than ever, to engage in serious comparative research in a collaborative spirit for greater self-understanding of the problems of our peoples, in theoretical and substantive terms, so that we are able to influence the course of events for fashioning a just society

I do hope that this Workshop of the South Asian sociologists will lead us to a new beginning of fraternal academic relations for shaping our discipline If all goes well, I would like a second engagement to take place within the year to carry forward what we have begun this morning

Notes

This is revised version of the Welcome Address delivered on 23 February 2005 to the South Asia Workshop on Sociology in South Asia Issues of Relevance and Rigour The Workshop was organised by the Indian Sociological Society in collaboration with the

Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, and the Department of Sociology, University of Pune, India

- For example, Yogendra Singh (1973) came out with the notion of the modernisation of tradition
- 2 In his textbook on sociology, Giddens states

Sociology had its beginnings in the attempts of thinkers to understand the initial impact of the transformations which accompanied industrialization in the West, and remains the basic discipline concerned with analyzing their nature. Our world today is radically different from that of former ages, it is the task of sociology to help us understand this world and its likely future (1993–12).

- Fake modernity referred to 'the incoherent, disharmonious, internally contradictory combination of three components (a) imposed modernity in some domain of social life, coupled with (b) the vestiges of traditional, pre-modern society in many others, and all that dressed up with (c) the symbolic ornamentations pretending to imitate western modernity' Forced modernisation, on the other hand, brought about extensive industrialisation, with obsessive emphasis on heavy industry, the shift from agricultural to industrial sector, proletarianisation of population, chaotic urbanisation, the growth of bureaucratic apparatus, of administration, police, and army, strong autocratic state There also appeared, sometimes in extreme degrees, all unintended side effects of modernity, including environmental destruction, pollution, depletion of resources, anomy and apathy of the mass society (Sztompka 1998)
- 4 I am referring to the dominant school of sociological teaching and research under the influential leadership of M N Srinivas
- 5 Ramkrishna Mukherjee, A R Desai, P C Joshi, I P Desai, and others constituted the Marxist stream
- 6 S C Dube provided the main inspiration for village studies, while linking them with rural development concerns
- 7 D P Mukherjee, who preferred to categorise himself as a Marxologist, was among the earliest to point out the fallacies of the hegemonic modernisation paradigm that counter-posed the traditional in opposition to the modern. In his Presidential address to the Ali India Sociological Society in 1955 he exhorted the assembled sociologists 'to take courage in both and openly say that the study of the Indian social system, in so far as it has been functioning till now, requires a different approach to sociology because of its special traditions, special symbols and its special patterns of culture and social actions' (italics added, D.P. Mukherjee 1958–24)
- 8 Satish Saberwal makes the point that with its 'syndromes of mobility, achievement, mobilisation and the like, and our preoccupation with caste and other forms of institutional inequalities', it 'distracted our attention from the study of secular inequalities like poverty and its perpetuation' (1979 247)
- I am trying to respond to T K. Oommen's important observation that, in effect, my concept of indigenisation was nothing more than contextualisation. What I am trying to communicate precisely is that we should not stop at contextualising. There was considerable anxiety in the Workshop that agents of parochialisation of knowledge will easily appropriate the concept of indigenisation. In the Indian context, it has been demonstrated that agents with a particular political agenda have already appropriated parochial knowledge as its indigenisation. This is reason enough for setting the record straight on the social scientific plane. Indigenisation in the universalistic mode is best exemplified in D.P. Mukherjee's quest for social change through tradition in opposition to, the blind succumbing to the tradition-modernity polarity paradigm. It

would be sad for the social science community in India, if misappropriation of social science concepts by political parties and ideologies lead to an argument for their withdrawal

10 Satish Saberwal, commenting on this paper, observes

On 'indigeneity', it seems to me that, rather than having to disavow its overtones of parochialism repeatedly, it might be safer to use the term 'autonomy'. That would underline the locus of choice and control in our own hands. In choice of concepts and theories, nothing should matter except the goodness of their fit with the evidence being considered. Open-ended autonomy would, I think, be the winning strategy in our situation.

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Dealing with Dinosaurs and Reclaiming Sociology: A Personal Narrative on the (non)Existence of Critical Sociological Knowledge Production in Sri Lanka

Sasanka Perera

Introduction

When I was asked to present a paper in the panel 'Theoretical Models in Sociological Research in South Asia Scope for Indigenous Intervention' I was momentarily confused as to how I could best address this issue My confusion resulted from the assumption that I would have to approach this issue from the perspective of my own Sri Lankan experience, which naturally was what I was most familiar with However, if I were to do this, I would necessarily have to deal with a serious absence or lack of a practice in critical theoretical engagement in sociological knowledge production in the country. In this context, I would suggest that there is nothing much in the form of theoretical models in sociological research one could offer from Sri Lanka. This does not mean that what is commonly 'packaged' as sociological knowledge is not produced in Sri Lanka In fact, such knowledge is profusely produced with much local flavour However, it suffers from a serious malnourishment in terms of theoretical sophistication and analysis, and generally tends to be simple ethnographic descriptions of social phenomena or rivers of statistical data courtesy SPSS and other such statistical software meant for social scientists

In making such observations, I must, however, make a fundamental clarification. That is, in this exploration I would be specifically looking at sociological knowledge produced in the Sinhala language and in English by sociologists resident in Sri Lanka and working in academic contexts. This self-imposed limitation, however, has some setbacks. One, sociological knowledge has not been produced merely as an autonomous intellectual project with no discursive associations and linkages with other discourses of knowledge such as history, archaeology, and political science. Some interesting texts have been produced in these disciplines that have also impacted sociological studies, particularly those dealing with issues such as ethnicity and nationalism. Yet to focus on these influences has been limited by constraints of time. Second, some interesting sociological work on Sri Lanka has been produced in relatively recent.

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times by overseas-based scholars and a handful of other relatively younger scholars currently resident in Sri Lanka but not working in academia I opted not to deal with this source of knowledge due to the fact that many of these texts have failed to impact the dominant sociological knowledge production process in the country based in universities, mostly due to restrictions of access both in terms of language (most are in English) and also in terms of actual availability of texts in the country, and the resultant non-usage of these texts in university courses and resultant debates Therefore, in real terms, this corpus of knowledge has remained irrelevant in the larger context of sociological knowledge production in the country

On the other hand, the idea of indigenous intervention has reached problematic and highly polemical extents in the context of Sri Lankan sociology/social sciences. Hence, a paper attempting to contextualise such a highly complex and extremely problematic context of knowledge production is both personally and professionally a hazardous enterprise given the mega narratives and super-personalities one would have to critically engage with in such an endeavour

Within the limits outlined above, the terrain of dominant sociological knowledge production in Sri Lanka offers a surreal experience, much like a walk through Jurassic Park of Steven Spielberg's imagination where a domain of prehistoric proportions exists, particularly in academic sociology relatively untouched by the advances made in international sociology in the midst of contemporary times. In this scenario, the mere technical innovations that have impacted Sri Lankan sociology exist out of context that is, out of engaged theoretical context and out of serious intellectual context So, when I refer to dinosaurs as a metaphorical devise, I mean by that individuals, attitudes, archaic means of text production and discourse generation, particular ways of doing things and ways of not doing things. In this context, my reading of this surreal domain is going to be an initial attempt to unravel the key aspects of this colourful, scary, complex, and largely time-frozen reality. In any event, a critical self-evaluation of sociological and social anthropological knowledge production in Sri Lanka has not yet been attempted, and is clearly overdue as an intellectual exercise I propose to do this by focusing on the following themes what is considered Sri Lankan sociology, what are its main features in terms of teaching, research and publishing, where does Sri Lankan sociology stand with regard to issues such as theoretical and analytical rigour, and what are perceived as indigenous interventions or innovations In the overall context of this discussion, I would attempt to sketch out how these thematic issues might be looked at on the basis of existing ground realities in Sri Lankan sociology

What is Sri Lankan Sociology?

Sri Lankan sociology suffers from a somewhat profound identity crisis and resultant confusion that is also to be seen in the region and elsewhere. This has to do with the merging and blurring of disciplinary borders between sociology and social anthropology. Writing in 1982, specifically about the Indian context, André Béteille made the following observations with regard to the same phenomenon in Indian sociology and social anthropology.

If one wishes to assert the fundamental unity of the two subjects, a particular conception of sociology can be chosen and it can be shown to be the same as the prevailing conception of social anthropology. But by choosing another conception of sociology someone else can highlight not the similarities between the two subjects but their differences (1982 4)

What Béteille has suggested for the Indian context is also applicable to the Sri Lankan context Internationally, and particularly in vibrant academic environments, the merging of disciplinary borders between sociology and social anthropology occurred, on the one hand, as a result of the emergence of inter-disciplinary studies as a viable method of research and analysis in the social sciences. On the other hand, approaches such as cultural studies and subaltern studies, with their porous borders, also helped loosen the disciplinary borders not only between sociology and social anthropology but also between these areas of study and history and archaeology among others This metamorphosis was also aided by the influence theoretical approaches such as postmodernism and poststructuralism had on sociology and social anthropology resulting from the critique of mega narratives and the privileged truth claims these approaches emphasised At the same time, the self-declared subject areas of sociology and social anthropology that were distinct up to the end of World War II began to merge further as a result of critical developments that took place in social anthropology and sociology in North America (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986)

In the Sri Lankan context, however, this merging of borders did not take place as a result of serious intellectual debate or viable cross-disciplinary experimentation in methodology and theory Rather, its identity crisis evolved under vastly different conditions, much of which can be located in the multiple crises that befell university education in the 1960s and after (Perera 1996a) In that situation, the priority for teaching and research in the social sciences, expect economics, was downgraded, the consequences of which are strikingly visible even to this day. On the other hand, the brain drain that occurred since the late 1950s and early

1)s meant that the best trained sociologists and social anthropologists of the time were lost to greener pastures of North America, Europe and Australasia (*Ibid*) Sri Lankan academia in sociology and social anthropology never recovered from these serious setbacks. Therefore, today who is an anthropologist and who is a sociologist has very little to do with a person's actual training as opposed to perception and context

Of the Sri Lankan universities that formally teach sociology/social anthropology, only the University of Sri Jayawerdenapura has a department that identifies itself as Department of Sociology and Anthropology, all other universities have departments of sociology Alternatively, as in the case of Eastern University and Sabaragamuwa University, one can find Departments of Social Sciences (Ibid) Nevertheless, if the contents of the sociology courses in any of these universities and the prescribed texts are examined, it would be obvious that what is generally taught is what is formally considered to be social or cultural anthropology in many other parts of the world In this state of institutional confusion and also e basis of intellectual trends that have emerged around the world, perhaps it is no longer necessary to identify such institutional borders and, in the Sri Lankan context, it is in any case not possible What is dangerous intellectually speaking, however, is that no serious and sustained debate has ever taken place in Sri Lankan academia about the status of sociology or social anthropology in the country From this point onwards, when I refer to sociology in Sri Lanka, I also refer to social anthropology and conversely

Let me briefly sketch out the historical evolution of sociology in Sri Lanka in order to contextualise what I consider its lapses at present 1 Compared to subject areas such as political science and economics, sociology was introduced to Sri Lanka quite late, that is, in 1949, six years after the establishment of the University of Ceylon (Silva 2001 47)/ Kalinga Tudor Silva has argued that, since its inception up to the present, Sri Lankan sociology can be divided into two distinct periods in terms of research focus the period from 1949 to 1983 was marked by an interest and preoccupation in kinship, caste, religion and ritual, land tenure and village studies, while the post-1983 period was marked by interests in nationalism, ethnicity, violence, gender and social change (Ibid: 50). While not an airtight categorisation, Silva's division does indicate the general orientations of Sri Lanka-centric sociological research I stress the word 'Sri Lanka-centric' as this categorisation takes into account not merely the work of sociologists working fulltime in Sri Lanka, but also the work of sociologists - with long-term interests in Sri Lanka - based abroad In fact, if one were to exclude the latter, this categorisation would have to be vastly revised mostly due to lack of seminal work that could indicate such clear orientations. In a way, this was and continues to be one of the central setbacks of sociological research in Sri Lanka That is, the best-known research on Sri Lanka has been produced by non-resident scholars whose work unfortunately has not adequately impacted upon the dominant university-based sociological discourse in the country, mostly due to lack of access

In 1949, teaching and research in sociology was established in Sri Lankan academia by a trio of American scholars Bryce Ryan, Murray Strauss and Jacqueline Strauss. This also meant that the dynamics and trends current in American sociology of the time were introduced to the local context (Ibid. 48-49) Given the dynamism of American empirical research of the time, Sri Lankan academic sociology thus initiated had a strong empirical focus. This led to the institutionalisation of what was known as the Village Studies Programme under the leadership of Ryan (Ibid 49) Although this established a strong tradition in field research with an emphasis on the thickness of ethnography, it was marked by an obvious lack of theoretical engagement and analytical rigour Writing in 1960, the first Sri Lankan professor of sociology, Ralph Pieris dismissed the Village Studies Programme as a mere data collection project with no depth or sociological validity (quoted in Ibid: 51). Pieris' criticism is obviously justified not only in the context of the Village Studies Programme in general, but also when taken in the context of Ryan's well-known and influential books Caste in Modern Ceylon (1953) and Sinhalese Village (1958). In a sense, Pieris' criticism was also a critique of the in-depth fieldwork method preferred by social anthropology. For him, anthropological fieldwork was suitable merely for the study of 'tribal societies', and when studying complex societies such as Sri I that did have historical records, a wider socio-historical approach n to be employed (*Ibid* . 51-52) In a sense, despite the serious limitations in Pieris' argument, this is the earliest and perhaps one of the very few internal critiques of Srı Lankan sociology to emerge from within academia. Pieris' own well-known work Sinhalese Social Organisation (1956), rather than a theoretically informed analysis was more an account that paid serious attention to historical records (Ibid 52) in keeping with his methodological interests.

During this initial period, the theoretical orientations that emerged in Sri Lanka-centric sociology tended to be mostly influenced by structural functionalism. It is generally accepted that it was Edmund Leach who initiated a process of theoretically informed social anthropological research in Sri Lanka as evident in his book *Pul Eliya*. A Village in Ceylon (1961). Again, the main source of influence was structural functionalism. But his work on caste also indicates Durkhemian influence, particularly

in Leach's attempts to analyse the Sinhala caste system using notions such as organic solidarity (*Ibid*) After Leach, a number of well-known anthropological forays into the correlations between kinship and land tenure were undertaken Much of S J Tambiah's early studies such as *The Structure of Kinship and its Relationship to Land Possession and Residence in Patha Dumbara* (1958), *Kinship Fact and Faction in Relation to the Kandyan Sinhalese* (1964) and *Polyandry in Ceylon with Special Reference to the Laggala Region* (1966) attempted to contextualise the correlations between kinship, land tenure and land ownership (*Ibid*. 53, 63). These were followed by a series of related studies undertaken by scholars such as Nur Yalman, Michael Banks, and K A David (*Ibid* 53)

Silva suggests that one of the first Sri Lankan anthropologists to undertake sustained fieldwork was Gananath Obeyesekere, initially with his work in the village of Medagama, which led to the publication of the book Land Tenure in Village Ceylon (1967) Even though this study also showed the influence of the structural functionalist framework of analysis, it also showed the influence of Weberian ideas, particularly in the use of notions such as 'status groups' in the analysis of local social or status categories such as pelantiya (Ibid. 53) Later on, Obeyesekere moved on to systematic study of Sinhala religion in which the emergence of his preoccupation with Freudian and psychoanalytical frameworks of analysis became evident

This period is the most fertile period for Sri Lankan sociology in terms of research, publication, debate, and the impact of research within the academic discourse. This was mostly because of the availability of hi 'i quality journals such the Modern Ceylon Studies, regular universitybased seminars and debates and, more importantly, the ability of the people involved in sociology and anthropology in different capacities to access the material that was being generated through English This was also a time that sociological research was undertaken by both local and overseas based scholars, and most material thus produced were available to local readerships as evident in the well-stocked collections from that period in the Main Library of the University of Peradeniya, which does not progressively transcend beyond that point with regard to material produced after the 1970s and 1980s Despite the dynamism in this period, it was also obvious that in terms of theory, the interest was merely to use theoretical approaches current in Euro-American centres of knowledge production at a given time to explain local social phenomena or conditions There was no serious critical engagement with these approaches with regard to their adequacy in the local contexts. As such, the dominant assumption was that they were in fact adequate In this

situation, it was simply not possible for the kind of indigenisation debate that arose in other parts of Asia to emerge in Sri Lanka at the time

After the 1970s and 1980s, the influence of Sri Lankan sociologists working and resident in the country were on the wane, and the dominant role in research published in English after this point was played by overseas-based scholars which included expatriate Sri Lankans Political violence and manifestations of cultural nationalism became a visible preoccupation in Srı Lanka-centrıc sociology after the 1970s, and particularly after the anti-Tamil violence of 1983 In this area, one of the earliest studies was Obeyesekere's 1974 study - Some Comments on the Social Background of the April 1971 Insurgency - that focused on the first JVP (Janata Vimukthi Peramuna) insurrection focusing on the caste background of the insurgents Another preoccupation that emerged during this time was the interest in understanding how ethno-cultural groups were interpreting and re-interpreting their collective pasts as evidenced in the work of Elizabeth Nissan, R L Stirrat, Val Daniel, among others. Yet another preoccupation was to understand how aspects. of religion impacted upon identity formation and group behaviour as indicated in the work of S J Tambiah, Bruce Kapferer, Stephen Kemper, HL Senevirathne, etc In addition, one could also specifically identify selected works of Val Daniel such as Charred Lullabies as ethnographies of violence Even though there was a significant volume of research in the post-1970s period, much of it did not adequately flow into local debates or the dominant academic discourse but rather became part of an international discourse on sociology and social anthropology, which nevertheless helped maintain Sri Lanka on the international research map In this context, and strictly in terms of local realities, the post-1970 and 1980 period marks a serious dismantling of Sri Lankan sociology in terms of research, publication, teaching and related activities. There are many interrelated reasons for this, which include the following

- The migration of pioneer Sri Lankan scholars to European and American universities
- 11 The relative lack of success in training others to take up their intellectual roles
- III Restriction of state funding and the non-availability of private funding which negatively impacted the regular publishing of scholarly journals and other for a of knowledge exchange and the resultant dismantling of the tradition of critical debate
- 1v The change in the medium of instruction in universities from English to Sinhala and Tamil in the 1960s and the inability to set up a programme to publish serious sociological knowledge in Sinhala and Tamil to augment this transformation

- v The non-emergence of a local academic publishing industry
- vi The non-emergence of a serious and viable local institutional system to undertake funding of research

It is in this context that one has to assess the status of Sri Lankan sociology today. Universities are no longer in the forefront of initiating or publishing cutting edge, path-breaking or creative research, neither is this the preserve of the civil society sector. Serious research on contemporary Sri Lanka is the activity of individuals, be they based in the country or beyond. In any case, as I noted earlier, this kind of work hardly makes it into university teaching programmes or libraries. What is clear is that, despite the availability of large institutional network and student and staff numbers, research and teaching in sociology in the universities is at best unimaginative, uncreative, predictable, theoretically regressive, and mostly dated. This is particularly so in the newer universities where training in sociology began without adequate intellectual resources in place and without the benefit of a pre-existing tradition, which both Colombo and Peradeniya Universities had, but which they too have failed to live up to in recent times

The most serious lapse in sociology in the Sri Lankan university system at present has to do with recruitment and training of staff that also negatively impacts on undergraduate and postgraduate training Even today, the minimum qualification with which young teachers are often recruited is a mere BA with no teaching experience and not much research experience This system was put in place when the universities were first established in the country, when there was a lack of welltrained teachers to take over the teaching responsibilities. At that time. many senior teachers were recruited from countries such as England, USA and India, while younger individuals they trained were recruited with basic qualifications with the explicit expectation that they would complete their higher training within a stipulated period. At that time, funds were available for such training and the young recruits had the English-language skills to acquire the needed training in any Englishlanguage university in the world However, the conditions today are very different The average recruit is neither competent in English nor are resources for higher training overseas as readily available. At the same time, in a situation where training at bachelor's degree level also has serious lapses, training beyond that is a serious challenge (Perera 1996a) In this context, Sri Lankan universities with regard to sociology are essentially basic undergraduate training centres with no dynamic and intellectually innovative postgraduate programmes in place.

On the other hand, since the primary focus of universities is basic undergraduate training, they do not offer adequate opportunities or systems of incentives for research. For instance, neither the university system nor the state nor the private sector has any kind of viable funding agencies that would encourage innovative research. The responsibility for social science research and knowledge dissemination in the larger context has long been held by the so-called 'Section F' of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science This entity that sounds more like a clandestine military unit rather than a centre that promotes social science research and dissemination, has hardly impacted on inhovative, theoretically engaged sociological research in the country If one would look through the contents of the regular seminar schedules and annual sessions of Section F, it would be quiet evident that the preference is given to development-oriented work with applied and technical utility rather than serious intellectual work with theoretical sophistication and analytical rigour. This does not mean that sociology in Sri Lanka or elsewhere does not have a development or applied role to play However. these two roles have to be clearly identified and developed separately because their purposes are vastly different Nevertheless, what is happening at present is the subsuming or the veritable disappearance of the more intellectually oriented and theoretically engaged work in the midst of the developmental discourse that is emerging and encouraged by the state as well as multi-lateral, bi-lateral and other development actors In the Sri Lankan context, this has reached dangerous heights where development actors have effectively colonised sociology Partha N Mukherji aptly summarises this situation in the following words, which apply well to the Sri Lankan situation, too.

Much of the academic time of many social scientists in universities and research institutes is being diverted to evaluation/consultancy researches very much demanded by NGOs These organisations are mostly donor driven and funded by external agencies who define the research agenda More often than not, the design of inquiry, research tools, and overall methodology to be used is pre-packaged by donors. The data so collected, the analysis done and the recommendations made are generally not available for research publications and restricted from public discourse It is unfortunate that resources for problem-oriented academic research are on the decline, even as money is going a-begging for sponsored client oriented evaluation research and consultancy There are several implications of such a research scenario First, scholars are distracted into evaluations and consultancies to the detriment of problem oriented, empirically based, theoretical and basic research and high quality teaching Second, research agendas are set externally by global funding agencies and the market Finally, institutions of research and teaching are left with little

option for their survival and future contingencies without reaching out to such external funding (2004 29-30)

It is in this context that one can understand the attempts of the World Bank's Colombo office to set up a consultancy service pro-vision agency within the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya with the enthusiastic involvement of its Department of Sociology, Department of Geography, among others Its first initiative was the 'National Conference on Opportunities and Challenges for the Development of Conflict-Affected North East Sri Lanka' in May 2004 The content of the Conference was a very clear indication that this was mostly a public sharing of consultancy reports and development-oriented papers written by government officers. civil society activists, independent consultants and university academics This kind of enterprise would be welcomed by most university academics, as it certainly addresses some very real economic problems many of them face However, it certainly would not help in the empowering of Sri Lankan sociology in particular or the country's collective academic social science discourse in general. Yet this is no longer a marginal or occulted activity, but very much a legitimate mainstream activity that is also perceived as having academic merit by many of its practitioners as well as the university system as indicated by the recognition given to such activity in the promotion scheme of university academics. In government-sponsored and -mandated university reform programmes that have emerged in recent times, it has become obvious that it is these kinds of technical skills rather than serious analytical and interpretive skills that the state expects universities to inculcate in their social science graduates

Sri Lanka also lacks a dynamic and vibrant academic environment, not in sociology alone, but in the social sciences and humanities in general In addition, in the hierarchical positioning of systems of knowledge in the country, sociology (along with other social sciences like political science, history, etc.) has long been situated at a very low level. At one level, it typifies the hegemony and the lack of enlightenment of the natural sciences and technical training programmes such as engineering, IT, medicine as they operate in the country, beyond which sociology has not been able to move intellectually (Perera 1996a). On the other hand, this positioning has also resulted from the lack of intellectual robustness of sociology as a system of knowledge production and the non-existence of a formal professional collective promoting innovative research, teaching, publishing and the intellectual image of sociology

Closely related to the situation described above is the lack of legitimate and vibrant forums for debate and dissemination of ideas that could

play an empowering role with regards to Sri Lankan sociology Although sociology or social anthropology never had a journal of its own in the country, journals such as Modern Ceylon Studies always had space for these disciplines at the peak of their publication history. But many of these journals are now defunct or are published irregularly. On the other hand, journals such as the Sri Lankan Journal of Social Sciences, in addition to being irregular also seem to attract more development-oriented papers than theoretical discussions, issue-based debates, or works based on serious empirical research. At the same time, access to these few journals are also seriously restricted given the fact these journals are published in English and most of the training in sociology in the country is offered in Sinhala and Tamil Similarly, university conferences in the social sciences are rare occurrences in Sri Lanka, particularly in sociology This also means that there is inadequate space for the emergence of a dynamic local discourse in sociology. On the other hand, many of the conferences organised by civil society organisations or development actors tend to have a development focus or are again restricted because of the use of the English language (Ibid) It is only rarely, if at all, that proceedings of the academically more useful conferences would be available in Sinhala or Tamil As such, much of the knowledge thus produced does not enter local debates, university courses or the discourse of sociology in general

It should be evident from the brief discussion above that sociological knowledge production in the country centred upon universities is not in an intellectually vibrant situation. It has gone through a historical process of decline, and is at present in a situation dominated by its role as a service provider to development actors, focused on undergraduate training and devoid of a critical or innovative research tradition. It is in this context that one has to evaluate how to locate ideas of indigenisation of sociology in Sri Lanka

The Politics and Rhetoric of Indigenisation of Sociology/Social Sciences

Before discussing the specificities of the Sri Lankan situation with regard to indigenous intervention and indigenisation of sociology, let me sketch out briefly what is generally meant by the term 'indigenous intervention' or 'indigenisation'. This is necessary, in part, because in the discourse of indigenous intervention, which has often been rhetorical, clarity has been one of the first casualties. More than with regard to sociology *per se*, the debates on indigenisation have been focused on the social sciences in general. One of the epistemologically and politically informed central

questions on indigenisation of social sciences is the following as articulated by Mukherji since 'the social sciences that originated in the West, are indigenous to the West, are they necessarily universal for the rest?' (2004 16) This question has to be understood in the context of the power relationships, institutional and resource disparities and inequalities within which the social sciences including its frames of reference, methodological apparatuses, theoretical orientations, conceptual formulations. categories of analysis and processes of interpretation became a global phenomenon irrespective of its genesis and early nurturing in Euro-American centres of knowledge production. More specifically, what is questioned in the indigenisation debates is the validity of the claims of universality of ('western') social sciences. In this context, Mukherii has posed the following question 'does the universal always explain the particular, unless the universals in the particulars contribute to the construction of the universal? (*Ibid*) Immanuel Wallerstein (2004) asserts that if social science is to make any headway in the present century, then it is necessary for it to overcome its Euro-centric heritage because it has distorted its analyses as well as its ability to deal with the problems of the contemporary world Like all systems of formal know-ledge production functioning in relatively democratic domains, in social sciences also it is not possible for any single paradigm to effectively facilitate the emergence of an intellectual space within which a multiplicity of discourses could take place In this context, social sciences are under 'conflicting pressures to produce authentic, credible, relevant and more convincing knowledge' (Mukherji 2004 18). However, in terms of the basic premises of the indigenisation debate, in the scheme of things outlined above, the hegemonic hierarchy of knowledge production in social sciences tends to get reaffirmed as articulated by Mukherji

Conspicuously, the rest of the world is perceived practically through all the major paradigms that have originated in the West. The discourses and debates in the West tend to get re-cited and recycled in terms of substantive realities in other societies and cultures. Dominant western interests in no small measure tend to condition the social sciences. This is the Eurocentrism of the social sciences and its hegemonic character (*Ibid*)

Within these notions of hegemony articulated in indigenisation debates, social sciences were considered parochial due to their perceived or real Euro-centricity as well as due to their 'imitative' nature in Third World contexts in which they were transplanted Writing in the 1940s, Chinese anthropologist Fei Hsiao-Tung, commenting on academic debates in Chinese universities of the time, referred to local scholars as 'pedants showing off their knowledge' on the basis of 'facts and theories

derived from western sociology' (quoted in *Ibid*) Similarly, in the introduction to the 1968 volume *The Relevance of the Social Sciences in Contemporary Asia*, Kikuo Yamoka observed that 'we Asian scholars have done little more than import the several social sciences directly from the West, and use them to prepare and deliver our lectures, but have failed to give birth to creative theories designed for, and derived from, Asian realities' (quoted in Atal 2004 102) It is also in this context that Syed Hussein Alatas coined the term 'captive mind' to describe the imitative tendencies of transplanted social sciences in Third World settings (Mukherji 2004)

In its most extreme formulations, the demand for indigenisation seems like a violent revolt 'against the dominance of western concepts, theories and methodologies, which are decried as "unsuitable" and "irrelevant" (Atal 2004 102) The more cautious proponents of indigenisation seem to recognise pitfalls of a mere rhetorical counter attack and, in this context, Atal outlines the following as some of the 'positive aspects' of indigenisation'

- Indigenisation is a plea for self-awareness and rejection of a borrowed consciousness. It emphasises the need for an inside view. Its proponents wish to stimulate such scholarly endeavour so as to promote thoughtful analysis of their own societies to replace the existing trend of knowing these via the West.
- Indigenisation advocates the desirability for alternative perspectives on human societies with a view to making social sciences less parochial and enriching them. This would, it is believed, emancipate the mind and improve the quality of professional praxis, so that society can be examined through new lenses.
- iii. Indigenisation draws attention to historical and cultural specificities and argues for the redefinition of focus, with a view to developing dynamic perspectives on national problems
- Iv Indigenisation should not lead to narrow parochialism, or the fragmentation of a single discipline into several insulated systems of thought based on geographical boundaries. It is opposed not only to false universalism, but also to false nationalism. Reduced to the level of national narcissism, indigenisation would be rendered futile (*Ibid* 105)

Krishna Kumar, writing in 1979, identifies three types of indigenisation, which as a typology is useful structural indigenisation, substantive indigenisation and theoretical indigenisation (quoted in *Ibid*) In terms of his categorisation and definitions, structural indigenisation is defined in reference to the institutional and organisational capacities of a country (the word he uses is 'nation') to produce and diffuse social

science knowledge (quoted in *Ibid*) For him, substantive indigenisation is conceptualised in terms of the content focus of social sciences, and its 'essential premise is that the main thrust of these disciplines in a country should be on its own society, people and economic and political institutions' (quoted in *Ibid*. 105-06) Kumar describes the notion of theoretical indigenisation in the following words 'theoretic indigenisation indicates a condition in which the social scientists of a nation are involved in constructing distinctive conceptual frameworks and metatheories which reflect their worldviews, social and cultural experience, and perceived goals (quoted in *Ibid*. 106) Atal suggest that indigenisation in Asia has taken place in four fronts teaching in the 'national' language and the use of local material, research by insiders, determination of research priorities and theoretical and methodological reorientation (*Ibid* 107)

It is difficult to sustain the generalised suggestion that indigenisation has been pursued on such broad fronts in the Asian context. This is certainly not the case in the Sri Lankan situation. This does not mean that the kind of activities mentioned above has not happened in Sri Lanka They have, and more often than not as part of an overall nationalist political project than as part of an intellectual project on indigenisation of social sciences On the other hand, even though the call for indigenisation of social sciences in Asia has been heard since the 1950s, with its peak in the 1970s, and the fundamental premises of the questioning has not been unreasonable, the problem, as Atal rightly points out, is that it has failed to go beyond the reactive phase (Ibid · 100) More specifically, indigenisation has been in a permanent reactive and rhetorical phase without being able to come up with serious alternatives that could be implemented in practice. If one looks at Kumar's categorisation above, one could easily see that despite the rhetoric over indigenisation it is possible to see that theoretical indigenisation has not been seriously attempted while other categories of indigenisation might have been attempted but with varying degrees of success. What I would like to look at in the Sri Lankan context is how notions of indigenisation have been perceived, articulated and implemented in the light of the regional debate summarised above and also in the light of political conditions peculiar to Srı Lanka

The Politics of Indigenous Intervention in Sri Lankan Sociology

As far as one could gather from available literature, the first time a formally trained Sri Lankan social scientist working in the country voiced opinions primarily within the indigenisation debate was when Ralph Pieris published his well-known essay 'The Implantation of Socio-

logy in Asia' (1969) While he was expressing opinions that are now very familiar within the indigenisation debate in the region, he was not talling specifically about the Sri Lankan situation, but the situation in Asia in general. There is also no indication that the concerns voiced by Pieris or the loud voices of the proponents of indigenisation throughout the Asian region had any serious impact on Sri Lankan social sciences in general or Sri Lankan sociology in particular. More specifically, compared to the ideas of individuals such as Leela Dube, M.S. Gore others in the Indian context and beyond, there is no evidence that Sri Lankan academia or academic sociology entertained any serious interest in the idea of indigenisation. In a sense, this is only to be expected in a situation where Sri Lankan sociology had not evolved into a visible and dynamic knowledge-production enterprise as it had in India.

However, there have been a number of interventions, which are mostly polemical, that have been made both in academic and popular circles that can be located within the larger parameters of the indigenisation debate even though these interventions have failed to generate any serious and sustained academic debate I would like to briefly place in context some of these interventions and assess the scope for indigenisation of sociology in Sri Lanka I would attempt this within the larger context of the intellectual status of Sri Lankan sociology described earlier in this paper. In the university system of the country, one sociology department has at least informally staked a claim as the pioneer in the process of indigenising sociology the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Sri Jayawardenapura, specifically under the leadership of Nandasena Ratnapala, who is perhaps the best-known Sri Lankan sociologist within academia as well as in popular circles At a lecture at the University of Kelaniya in 1994, another popular teacher from Ratnapala's department observed that it was only that Department along with its colleagues from the University of Kelaniya that were engaged in 'real' sociology, a sociology that understood the 'pulse' of the people 2 It is interesting to note that both these universities were seats of Buddhist learning closely associated with the late nineteenth century Buddhist revival prior to their transformation into secular national universities in the late1950s Colombo University's Department of Sociology was specifically targeted at this public lecture as a highly 'Americanised' place, which was a specific reference to the Colombo faculty's North American, Western European or Australian training In the same lecture, Ratnapala's 'pioneering' role in 'popularising' sociology was stressed. The word popularising in this context is used to refer to the notion of enhanced access to what was perceived to be sociological texts by publishing them in the Sinhala language as well

as writing what was perceived as 'popular sociology' via newspapers On both counts, these ideas were expressed primarily within an indigenisation paradigm even though the word indigenisation was rarely us Rather than being a rigorous intellectual platform, this provided a rhetorical populist platform, which won many adherents, particularly at the popular level It is no accident that the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Sri Jayawardenapura is the bestown sociology/anthropology department within the country, while it is perhaps the least known outside Academics and graduates of this Department have produced a large array of perceivably sociological texts, mostly in the Sinhala language. These are mostly introductory texts meant for first-year undergraduates and simple ethnographic descriptions of villages or socially marginalised ethno-cultural or professional communities such as street sex-workers, coolies in the Colombo Fort area. etc These works are generally marked by the thinness of their ethnography Nevertheless, specifically because of being in the Sinhala language, their collective reach and influence have been considerable within academic sociology, most clearly seen among undergraduates and high school students 3 This version of indigenised sociology can be identified on the basis of the following features

- 1 The works are mostly produced in the Sinhala language, and they usually lack basic technical standards of academic writing such as footnoting, bibliographic presentation, rigour in editing and so on
- There is a serious and consistent attention to local published sources as opposed to an almost total absence of non-Sri Lankan scholarly sources. Much of the local sources tend to be popular material such as newspapers and magazines
- III Their emphasis is on simple ethnographic descriptions marked by a general absence of analysis and interpretation
- iv There is a clear absence of engagement with (western-derived) current social theory and an absence of alternate local theoretical formulations

The claims for indigenising social sciences and sociology emerged in the most virulent fashion in the public domain in the 1980s. I stress the word virulent because this was a debate that was rich in political rhetoric fuelled by notions of cultural superiority and ethno-cultural nationalism emanating from sections of the Sinhala polity in the south of the country. At the same time, this was a debate that lacked scholarly rigour. More specifically, rather than stemming from the need to address a serious epistemological problem linked to knowledge production the country, this arose from a parochially defined political movement that is now called 'Jathika Chintanaya' (national or indigenous consciousness or

ways of thinking). In this specific context, the proponents of an illarticulated demand for indigenisation of social sciences (particularly sociology) have been the leaders of this movement. None of them is a sociologist. In this scheme of things, the following features could be identified as promoting indigenisation.

- Virulent anti-western sentiments with regard to the social sciences and formal knowledge production in general, without offering any viable alternatives
- 11 Marginal attempts of critiquing some basic concepts or theoretical positions of sociology/social sciences
- 111 Production of some polemical texts promoting these ideas

However, despite the popularity and vocal nature of this movement, it did not succeed in legitimising the demand for indigenisation of sociology or social sciences within the university community or beyond Part of the problem was the virulent nature of the debate and the resultant fear it injected into many people, and consequently there was no serious and constructive engagement with opposing ideas. One of the first debates that arose in the 1980s was between Colombo University sociologist Newton Gunasinghe and Nalin de Silva of the same university's Mathematics Department The bone of contention was the notion of 'little' tradition and 'great' tradition as articulated by Robert Redfield and introduced to Sri Lankan sociology by scholars such as Gananath Obevesekere in a different context. In a brief essay published in a local newspaper, Gunasinghe suggested that much of the known cultural practices of the Kandyan period in Sri Lanka could be categorised as 'belonging to the little tradition' What de Silva initially questioned was not the validity of the concept in the local context, but that culture in the ancient periods could not be simply considered part of a 'little tradition' In other words, he was contesting the use of the word 'little' to refer to Sinhala cultural practices of the eighteenth century from a Sinhala nationalist point of view In that context, as the debate progressed, he also questioned the validity of these kinds of conceptualisations as well as the relevance of sociology in the local context. But given the premises from where the debate began, it had from the beginning become a polemical exercise, rather than an intellectual one Since that time, de Silva has passionately attacked through numerous polemical tracts social sciences, particularly writings that have questioned dominant accepted interpretations of Sinhala culture and Sinhala identity. He has gone on record by labelling the social sciences 'the illegitimate offspring's of western science that are not even taken seriously in the West' (Perera 1996b) De Silva continues his interventions from the pages of the

English language daily *The Island* as well as its Sinhala counterpart *The Diavayina* without any success in generating a wider debate on these issues in academia

The other best-known individual who has critiqued the role of social sciences in the country from a nationalist perspective, while promoting an indigenisation agenda, has been the popular poet and novelist Gunadasa Amarasekera Amarasekera lacks the virulence of de Silva, but he is also a strong proponent of Jathika Chintanaya. In fact, he coined that particular expression It was through his first collection of nonfictional essays that he made his first foray into a systematic critique of everything from Marxism in the Sri Lankan context to social sciences and sociology. Like in the case of de Silva Amarasekera's critique of social sciences, and particularly sociology, was from a rather parochial nationalist point of view informed by a very limited interpretation of what was perceived to be Sinhala culture and identity. In this context, the debates in Sri Lanka did not have the wider epistemological concerns that typified the indigenisation debate in other parts of Asia It was more concerned with 'rescuing the Sinhala culture' from the 'erroneous interpretations of western-trained social scientists' The wider epistemological concerns referred to above only surfaced superficially as mere surface and rhetorical aspects of these debates Amarasekera, in his 1988 collection of essays titled Ganaduru Mediyama Dakinemi Arunalu (In the Midst of Darkness I see the Dawn) challenged the notion that Sri Lanka was a 'multi-cultural' or 'multi-ethnic' society However, instead of a sustained intellectual critique of these concepts to explain why they might not explain local social and political realities, he suggested that Sri Lanka was fundamentally a Sinhala Buddhist society as that was the primary source of cultural, emotional and social sustenance of all peoples in the country. For instance, he argued that the Muslims in the country were 'Sınhala Buddhıst Muslims and that the Tamils in the country were 'Sınhala Buddhıst Hindus' as evident in the following excerpt

If we are to achieve this [presumably national liberation] successfully, we must stop repeating the falsehood that the country is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural state, which was taught to us by the British

The Tamil people in this country have a specific culture and identity of their own Muslim people also have their own culture and identity But those cultures or identities are not contradictory to the culture and identity of the Sinhala people More accurately, those cultures and identities are versions of the culture and identity of the Sinhala people Those who live amongst us are Sinhala Buddhist Muslim people In the north, there are Sinhala Buddhist Tamil people who are better than us [that is, better Sinhala Buddhists] The reason for this is because over the last two

thousand years those people have lived under the shadow of the Sinhala Buddhist majority If this is to continue and we want to live in harmony, we should first eliminate the half-truth that this country is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious one (italics added, Amarasekera 1988 23, also quoted in Perera 1995 57)

If de Silva and Amarasekera are the best-known polemical writers in Sri Lanka who have critique both conceptual frameworks and texts of social sciences in general and sociology in particular, it is Nandasena Ratnapala who attempted within academia to address the issue of indigenisation of sociology through the production of what he considered academic tracts. This attempt too was informed by notions of Sinhala Buddhist cultural identity, but it was not virulent Ratnapala's best-known attempts in this regard are his books *Buddhist Sociology* (1993a) and *Crime and Punishment in the Buddhist Tradition* (1993b). The blurb in *Buddhist Sociology* introduces the book as follows

Buddhist Sociology attempts to build a systematic sociology from early Buddhist thought For this purpose, the author utilises the original Pali sources, and builds the system carefully, making use of the available Buddhist tradition too He adopts a sociological cum anthropological approach, enriching it by experiences derived from Buddhist thought itself. In a world such as ours, where we are tired and wary of ready-made theories, this excursion into Buddhist Sociology brings a welcome change. It opens up an alternative way of thinking and living to all of us (Ratnapala 1993a)

Effectively, this is an effort to create a 'way of living' in a world where people are 'tired and wary of ready-made theories'. In this exercise, there is a serious confusion between the epistemological roots of formal sociology and those of Buddhism. If sociology was a way of reading human society and interactions, Buddhism was a way of living and a method that could be adopted to achieve a certain kind of self-fulfilment. Combining the goals of sociology and Buddhism cannot be undertaken in a simple exercise, if at all. If Ratnapala's effort was aimed at initiating a Sociology of Buddhism, rather than a Buddhist Sociology, that would have been more achievable in the short run. The hazards of Ratnapala's approach are evident from his own words in the introduction.

The Buddha's social thoughts are not found in one single place in the Buddhist cannon, but are scattered all over *One has to go through the entire* Thripitaka *in order to glean stray sayings* which when collected, help us to formulate a coherent social theory *Buddha's primary aim was*

not to weave a systematic social or any other theory, but to help us extricate ourselves from the innumerable sufferings in this cycle of birth (italics added, Ratnapala 1993a 2)

Clearly, the goal of Buddhism, or the aim of the Buddha, was not a clinical study of society, but to find a way to address 'suffering' and find a permanent solution to it. It is this emphasis that has been interpreted by some as Buddhism's 'other worldly' orientation. In this overall context, Ratnapala's basic method is to compile ad hoc observations attributed to the Buddha uttered at different moments, and arrange them in what he considers a coherent fashion to suite some of today's larger social and political context. In fact, the table of contents of Ratnapala's book clearly illustrates that his methodology of presentation has been to carefully compile Buddha's observations and injunctions from different contexts under conceptual categories derived from mainstream sociology family. socialisation, social stratification, woman and society, a political theory in Buddhist tradition, Buddhist economics, Buddhism and education. crime and social control, violence, terrorism and Buddhism, alcohol and intoxicants, and Buddhist philosophy of health. In effect, instead of the impossibility of indigenising sociology on the basis of Buddhist thought, this exercise has resulted in the imprisonment of components of Buddhist thought within analytical categories of sociology/social sciences Rather than an epistemological liberation, this has led to a stifling of analytical categories and approaches, sometimes with bizarre consequences For instance, with reference to socialisation, Ratnapala makes the following observation. 'socialisation in the Buddhist perspective is an experience that goes to the time before one is born (in the mother's womb), or perhaps is connected with countless earlier births' (Ratnapala 1993a 4) Instead of a process governed by culture and social dynamics of a particular moment, socialisation in this context becomes a process that is entangled in Buddhist belief on karma and rebirth, thereby removing conventional sociology from its non-religious roots and anchoring it well within the theological beliefs of Buddhism, blurring the boundaries of a 'secular' epistemological tradition and a system of religious thought

Ratnapala's version of sociology also becomes reductionist and parochial as its entire approach is limited to the thought and injunctions attributed to a single individual who lived over two thousand years ago, namely, the Buddha This undermines the plurality of ideas and approaches that has traditionally typified mainstream sociology, whether such ideas are derived from the West or not It also contradicts Buddhism's own strong position on plurality of ideas and free inquiry as outlined in texts such as *Kalama Sutta* Hence, Ratnapala's approach can

also be critiqued more legitimately with regard to its parochialism in the same way mainstream sociology has been critiqued by proponents of indigenisation of sociology in Asia Although Ratnapala does not specifically spell out that *Buddhist Sociology* is a text written with the paradigm of indigenisation, it is within this paradigm it has to be located given its overall context and the orientations of Ratnapala's own Department ⁴ On the other hand, despite an exhaustive compilation, this text also suffers from the many shortcomings that this school of thought suffers from as outlined earlier

Conclusion

We can make a number of observations on Sri Lankan sociology as well as the scope for indigenisation of sociology in Sri Lanka Although Sri Lankan sociology experienced a certain kind of vibrancy and growth in the 1950s and 1960s, it remained largely an unquestioned 'implant' (Pieris cited in Silva 2001) On the other hand, the developments since that time have seen a very clear decline in sociology as a system of knowledge production, particularly in the universities Even though a number of individuals have excelled in research and publication, whose work was not looked at in this paper, such work has also not made a serious impact on mainstream university-based sociology mostly as a result of lack of access This means that sociology in Sri Lanka is currently occupying a very weak position intellectually in terms of research, debate, teaching and publications

A widespread indigenisation debate has not taken off in Sri Lanka What have taken off are polemical streaks of that debate, rather than coherent intellectual exchanges of ideas based on clear epistemological concerns In this situation, where sociology is not innovative, uncritical and intellectually weak, the idea of indigenisation itself is dangerous and out of context, as it does not have the intellectual robustness in sociology, or the country's academia in general, to sustain it As a result, such a debate can only continue as a polemical, parochial, ultra nationalist and intellectually regressive exercise. This is already evident from the discussion above Sri Lankan sociology as it stands at present is not ready for a serious and engaged intellectual debate that is necessary to contextualise and evaluate the issues involved in a notion such as indigenisation. It would be far safer to let it remain as a fundamentally unimaginative and non-innovative 'implant' until it is ready to emerge from its Jurassic Park and move into a newer and more enlightened world at some distant point in the as yet invisible future

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Notes

- 1 For a brief historical summary of sociological/anthropological work produced on Sri Lanka, see Silva (2001) For an informative summary of work produced by anthropologists from Sri Lanka, see Nissan (1993)
- 2 Personal communication
- 3 For a detailed and critical analysis of the approach of the Sri Jayawardenapura University's practice of sociology, see Sajeewani et al. (2001)
- 4 Ratnapala's other book Crime and Punishment in the Buddhist Tradition (1993 b) follows a similar approach. It is basically a compilation of Buddhist vinaya (disciplinary) rules and other ideas linked to notions such as crime, deviant behaviour, and justice and punishment gleaned from various sources

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Sociology as a Discipline in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities

Gulzar H. Shah, Asif Humayun Qureshi and Bushra Abdul-Ghaffar

The primary aim of this paper is to critically review various dimensions of the development of sociology as a discipline in Pakistan. Such attempts are sparse and different in focus Hassan Nawaz Gardezi (1966) was the first sociologist to attempt a systematic review of the progress of this discipline in Pakistan till the mid-1960s. In 1991, Gardezi (1991) revisited this theme from a slightly different angle, this time analysing the effect of colonialism on social development and, in turn, its influence on sociology as a discipline Later, in a brief article, he examined the emerging patterns of sociological research and the major areas of research (Gardezi 1994). Adding another dimension, Sabeeha Hafeez (2001) has studied the professionalisation of sociology in Pakistan based on six indicators empirical, theoretical, cumulative, non-ethical, non-trivial, and welfare orientation Muhammad Hafeez (2005) has described the growth of the discipline during 1985-2003 The focus of this paper is on the opportunities and challenges facing sociology as a discipline in Pakistan We have used a combination of secondary and primary data literature was reviewed to highlight history and development of the discipline to date, secondary data were collected from published sources such as the annual reports of the University Grants Commission (UGC), and key informants were interviewed

The key interviewees included faculty members across Pakistan, from all the nine universities having independent sociology departments. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with other sociologists teaching in colleges or working in 'applied setting' (for example, text-book board, curriculum wing, etc.) (see Appendix I). In selecting our sample of respondents, the first priority was the department head, and only where the department head was not available other faculty members were selected. Interviews were conducted by the two senior authors, either in person or over telephone. Some of the interviewees were asked follow-up questions via E-mail. Roughly, half of the interviews were conducted in person. In cities other than Lahore and surroundings, telephone interviews (ranging from 30 to 45 minutes) were held.

Data collected from in-depth interviews were analysed by isolating important concepts and themes Recommended methodology for qualita-

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tive data analysis (see Patton 1990, Weitzman and Miles 1995, Coffey and Atkinson 1996) was followed For instance, concepts were not fully formed prior to data collection. An open-ended question on the state of sociology in Pakistan and the challenges and opportunities confronting it was asked of all the key informants, using minimum probing. This was done to prevent interviewer's influence from shifting the interviewees' focus away from their original answers. The coding of interviews was done using three revisions of qualitative interviews as suggested by William Lawrence Neuman (1997) The first revision, called 'open coding', was done to see emerging themes and subthemes. The interview transcripts were next revised in a manner referred to as 'axial coding', in order to focus on data and for combining or splitting themes Lastly, relevant themes were kept, while discarding others, comparisons were performed, and generalisations were drawn According to Mathew B Miles and A Michael Huberman (1994), these three steps in analysing qualitative data are respectively for data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification

Development of the Discipline

As a discipline, sociology has a recent history in Pakistan and it has had shaky existence, particularly in the last couple of decades. Sociology was not offered by any of the institutions of higher learning in Pakistan at the time of its independence in 1947. The Punjab University was the pioneer in introducing sociology as a university-level course for Masters degree in economics, political science, history and philosophy in 1950. Three years later, sociology was introduced as a major subject at the Bachelor's level as well (Alvi, PI)

Development of Academic Programmes

The first department of sociology was established in the Punjab University with American support in 1955 John B Edlefsen, a senior professor of sociology at Washington State University, Pullman was its first head The first M A class of the Department had thirty-five students (Alvi, PI) Other universities followed suit in establishing sociology departments (see Table 1) In 1961, two other universities, namely, University of Karachi and University of Agriculture in Faisalabad (UAF), established their Departments of Sociology Interestingly though, the latter's Department of Rural Sociology was established in the same year as the UAF The opening of the Sociology Department at Sindh University in 1964 raised the number to four within ten years of the establishment of the first

Table 1	Chronology of sociology departments in Pakistan	
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University	University established	Department established	Level(s) offered currently
Punjab University Lahore	1882	1955	PhD in Sociology, Masters (regular) Masters (self-financed), BSc Hons, BSc Hons (evening), NGO studies
Sindh University Jamshoro, Sindh	1947	1964	PhD in Sociology, Masters in Sociology, BSc Hons
University of Peshawar	1950	1992	MPhil and PhD in Sociology, Masters in Sociology, Masters in Anthropology, BA Hons
University of Karachi	1951	1961	PhD in Sociology, Masters and MPhil in Sociology, BSc Hons
University of Agriculture Faisalabad	1961	1961	PhD in Sociology, Masters in Sociology, BSc Hons
Balochistan University Quetta	1970	1972	Masters in Sociology, PhD in Sociology
B Z University Multan,	1975	2002	Masters in Sociology, MPhil Sociology
University of Arid Agriculture Rawalpindi	1995	2004	Masters in Sociology, Masters in Anthropology

Source Interviews listed in Appendix I, date of university's establishment was obtained from the HEC website http://www.hec.gov.pk/htmls/hei/HEIseniority_list.htm (retrieved on 23 January 2005)

sociology department in the country. If the growth in the number of sociology departments is an indicator of the discipline's development, the next four decades witnessed a near stagnation, during the last forty years, only five new sociology departments have been established

In contrast, the universities in Pakistan have grown exponentially since its independence By 1964, there were six public universities in the country. Punjab University, Lahore, Sindh University, Jamshoro, Sindh, Peshawar University, Peshawar, University of Karachi, University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, and University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. As mentioned earlier, by 1964, four out of these six universities had a degree-awarding department of sociology. So far, none of the private universities in the country offers a Masters-level course in sociology. To date, the number of public universities in Pakistan has soared to a whopping forty-six. While the first private university in the country

was established in 1982, the number of private universities has risen to thirty-five as of February of 2005 (HEC 2005) Considering the growth of universities vis-à-vis the sociology departments, it would be reasonable to conclude that sociology has not kept pace with the growth of university-level education in other disciplines Currently, only nine out of these forty-six or 20 percent of the public universities have a sociology department. If one were to include the private universities in the denominator, the percentage of universities with a sociology department would be lower still, that is, 11

By the time the first department of sociology in Pakistan was established in 1955, sociology as a discipline had reached greater maturity in other countries of the world. The first chair in sociology in Asia was established at Tokyo University in 1883. The second oldest Department of Sociology in Asia was established in 1919 at the University of Bombay, and Sir Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) was its the first Head (Momin 2005). That was three years before the first Department of Sociology in Canada was founded at McGill University in 1922 (McGill University 2005). In Sri Lanka, University of Peradeniya was the first one to establish a sociology department in 1949 (University of Peradeniya 2005). Sociology was, thus, a late bloomer in Pakistan, making most of the sociological thought in Pakistan fairly contemporary. Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) had the first sociology department established in 1957 (Gardezi 1966).

Development of Sociological Thought and Research Focus

Formal programmes in sociology underwent considerable growth during 1960s (see Table 1) The number of trained sociologists too increased accordingly Many sociology graduates from Pakistani universities went abroad, mostly for higher studies in sociology in the USA and most of them returned to join research organisations and academic programmes

The early phase of sociology's development in Pakistan witnessed the emergence of two distinctive paradigms. As a result of training at and networking with the universities in USA a strong influence of American sociological thought was reflected in the Pakistani sociological community's research and teaching. The research and writings including undergraduate textbooks of most Pakistani sociologists used conceptual framework, terminology and methodology originating in America (*Ibid*) Interestingly, Dacca University, established with European connections, had different orientations. The Dacca school took on historical and social anthropological approach, wherein the teaching was dominated by social philosophy, social history, and anthropological conceptual and methodo-

logical focus In contrast, the teaching and research at the Punjab school were guided by empirical methodology and analysis of issues of core sociological relevance (*Ibid*) It appears that those two discrete influences still have their traces on sociology in Pakistan and Bangladesh

By 1962, three basic concerns in the discipline were recognised (1) there were cultural barriers to data collection, (11) sociological methods and research techniques were 'imported' and did not suit Pakistan's local context, and (111) there was the question of applicability of sociological theories developed in the foreign context in the study of Pakistani social reality (Ibid) Gardezi (1994) looked at areas attracting sociologists' research attention during the first three decades in Pakistan. He pointed out that rural life was fairly well depicted as a theme in sociological research Most research scholars started working on attitude and values of the villagers. The task was considered important with the image of Pakistan as predominantly a rural society. The inquiry broadly included problems of the underprivileged sections of society, fertility control, modernisation of agriculture, community development, crime, and poverty Overall, Pakistani sociology has been mostly ahistorical, eclectic and atheoretical, and thus narrowly empirical Some areas of study have attracted more attention than others. Research studies mostly focused topics such as rural communities, applied sociology, age, gender, political economy and demographic processes (Gardezi 1966, 1994)

In an analysis of 108 writings in sociology till 1981, sixteen areas of specialisation were identified by Sabeeha Hafeez (2001) Of these published and unpublished writings, the areas attracting most attention, in the order of frequency were sociology of women (120), demography (68), sociology of development (66), rural sociology (56), urban sociology (44), social problems (39), and social order (33) Since 1970, attention was paid to age, gender issues mainly due to the global interest towards the welfare of children and women issues Studies sponsored by UNESCO are the major references in this regard and are exploratory in nature Interdisciplinary perspectives are in vogue currently, mainly due to the role of political economy in the country.

The in-depth interviews have highlighted a need for sociologists to study emergent social problems. The areas needing attention include relationship between the Muslim world and New World Order, sociology of education, healthcare access, quality and awareness problems and myriad of other social problems such as sectarian killings, suicide bombings, low literacy rate and suicides. Application of sociological knowledge in proposing the solution to social problems should be promoted (R. Ahmed, PI, Chaudhary, PI, Shahzad, PI)

Challenges

The challenges confronting sociology in Pakistan are multifaceted. Some of these challenges are general to higher education in social sciences and to education in general in Pakistan. For instance, the biggest challenge to the development of any scientific discipline in Pakistan is people's distrust of scientific worldview and scientific explanations (Zakir, PI).

The challenges to sociology in Pakistan can be grouped into three major categories First, the discipline has not gained due recognition, primarily due to problems resulting from the absence of a forum to promote collectivity and networking This, in turn, has prevented policy makers and intervention programmes from seeking sociologists' services With little or no career opportunities, sociology as a discipline has been unable to attract and retain excellence. The second set of challenges pertain to the absence of a research culture among sociology students, faculty and professionals, due primarily to the absence of an enabling environment, including research facilities, funding, and due to time constraint resulting from heavy teaching assignments and lack of training in the art and science of research. The final set of challenges encompasses issues such as shortage of qualified teaching faculty, failure to attract high quality students by the sociology departments, poor quality of syllabi and curricula, non-availability of standard textbooks written for the local context, and stereotypes about the subject

Lack of Recognition as a Discipline

Sociology as a discipline has been underappreciated, undermined and undersold in Pakistan Both students and employers show a lack of understanding as to what the discipline entails In the absence of proper projection of the discipline, several negative stereotypes exist about sociology It is considered impractical and of low importance Consequently, it receives little attention Although sociology has been formally institutionalised in Pakistan, it is not fully professionalised (Sabeeha Hafeez 2001)

The lack of recognition of the subject is apparent in the general tendency among common people to confuse it with 'social work' (Manawar, PI) The subject is viewed as boring, soft, and deprived of potential for a decent career. While the latter may be a self-fulfilling prophecy, the subject's importance lies in its relevance to contemporary society and life (S R. Ahmad, PI)

Due to such lack of recognition, the discipline suffers in a variety of ways, including mattention during public budget allocation. Consequent-

ly, libraries and computer labs are underdeveloped. Lack of development causes lack of policy attention, which in turn feeds into deterioration and underdevelopment of the discipline (Khan, TI). Challenges emerge and multiply due to the inefficient role performed by the sociologists, and insufficient recognition of the discipline (M. Ahmad, PI).

Reasons for under-appreciation There are many reasons for the lack of recognition of the discipline From a purely economic point of view, it is not viewed as a promising career choice. It simply does not translate into high paying jobs (Ejaz, PI). As a result of the failure of the sociologists in creating a niche for themselves in the socio-political arena, other more visible social sciences took their 'market share' of jobs as well. Poor performance and products of sociologists are partially responsible for its poor image. Policy makers, general public and occupants of decision-making positions have been bogged down with political science, economics and agriculture science in the 1980s and 1990s. They overlooked the fact that sociologists can produce knowledge necessary for successful public service interventions. The solution is not in quantity but quality of education in sociology (Khan, TI)

Lack of interest on part of the university sociology departments in introducing sociology at the college level is partly to be blamed for keeping it from gaining visibility. The brain drain from the discipline reduces the number of sociologists available for academic research and teaching. Sociology is not offered in most of the colleges. Moreover, many good sociologists do not stay either in the discipline or in the country. Such 'brain drain is inflicted upon sociology because sociology is a discipline that is like "O Positive Blood" in that it can be substitute for many disciplines' (Munawar, PI)

College-level education in Pakistan is not planned according to the society's needs. Individual enthusiasts belonging to a certain discipline may influence the authorities governing colleges for inclusion of their subject. Sociology is not introduced in many colleges because sociologists have not shown an interest in doing so (Habibullah, PI and TI). Sociologists, particularly those in academic setting have not produced significant amount of academic or action research in the past couple of decades, for the reason discussed later in this paper (Javed, PI)

Discipline's growth vis-à-vis social transformation. In response to various global and local processes, including globalisation and technological development, predominance of mass media, internet availability, and internal and international migration, Pakistani society has undergone rapid socio-cultural transformation in the last couple of decades. Sociological research has not kept pace with it (Khan, TI, M. Ahmed, PI)

Sociologists must play their due role in helping out society in dealing with emerging social problems resulting from emerging global influence. They must use their research to inform policy at various levels in both public and private sectors. In today's global community, development in every country is constrained by international systems. Pakistan is in a state of rapid change, and it has to face a lot of challenges (Hafeez, PI)

Changing social milieu presents new issues, increasing the importance and need for sociological studies, though consequences of such abrupt change may not be necessarily good for the society (Islam, PI)

Absence of a Professional Association

As a discipline, sociology in Pakistan was a late bloomer. Its development, growth, and collaborative work, however, picked up pretty well across the country in the first two or three decades. The Pakistan Sociological Association (PSA) was founded in April 1963, and the first seminar of this Association was held in Dhaka University (then in East Pakistan) in the same year. After playing a fairly impressive role in organising its regular annual conferences, the PSA could not continue its activities in the post-mid-1980s era (Sabeeha Hafeez 2001)

Appendix II provides details of the conferences held by the PSA. In the current research, all key informants shared the concern that the absence of a common platform is primarily to be blamed for sociology's underdevelopment in Pakistan Due to lack of a unifying forum, there is lack of essential networking in the sociology community. This has lead to lack of collaboration among sociology faculty in Pakistani universities (E1az, PI) Many believe that PSA's demise can be attributed to the then (in the mid-1980s) office bearers' loss of interest in continuing its activeties, and their quest to keep the positions (R Ahmed, PI) Consequently, elections were not held after 1985 and eventually the president of PSA retired from his university position, retaining the title of PSA President The successors had their own excuses for not intervening to change the situation, including scarcity of time. Ironically, similar situation occurred in Bangladesh, where the Association became defunct in the early 1990s However, the successors created a parallel association of hardcore sociologists to rectify the situation Currently the Bangladesh Sociological Society has twenty-two members (Bangladesh Sociological Society 2005)

The need for continued collaboration and collective activity was underscored by many Professional associations are instrumental in creating synergies and promoting collaboration in a discipline Not having PSA or a similar association active for the last twenty years has

been the worst set back to sociology in Pakistan There is a serious interaction gap between sociologists and social sciences in Pakistan (Mann, TI; Munawar, PI, M Ahmad, PI) Selfish interests have caused problems in the sociology community Only charismatic leadership can now save it from sinking further (Karim, PI)

Absence of Research Culture

Analysis of the interview data strongly suggests that the culture of scientific sociological research is nearly non-existent in Pakistan. This implies that both material and non-material cultural components are non-existent. The material culture includes research facilities such as access to journals and books in the libraries, computers, data repositories, and funds. The non-material culture includes the research knowledge, training, the belief system (that research is essential), the norm to publish, taboos (for example, proscriptive norms against violation of research ethics), folkways and mores. Absence of research culture is a huge bottleneck for research performance. For instance, Partha Nath Mukherji (PI) believes that provision of a well-equipped research library can be the single most important factor in promoting research culture.

The solution is to get more help for facilitating student research Even if other things remain unchanged, the addition of a fieldwork supervisor trained in the science and art of data collection can improve the quality of student's research in the universities 'We get by without it, and quality suffers' (Khan, PI) Lack of creativity and mere replication and duplication characterises the current nature of research (Hafeez, PI)

Another challenging aspect of research in sociology is that it is not systematic. Scattered topics are chosen for research, which are neither systematic nor based on society's needs. Older research areas are often regurgitated. Only recently, some students have started addressing new topics such as extremism, fashion, and role of electronic media (Tanvir, TI). Some other barriers to existence of a research culture are listed in the following subsections.

Sociological Theory's Indigenisation and Contextualisation

Theory provides direction to research in a manner that a road map does to driving (Guy et al 1987) Sociological research conducted in Pakistan in the past often ended up in blind alley, as it was mostly data-driven Some investigations were conducted without any theoretical framework. There were others who incorporated theoretical explanations to suit their

empirical findings, rather than using theory to give direction to research and coming up with new theories based on empirical findings

Among the reasons for lack of theorisation in Pakistani sociology, lack of research training, import of foreign theories, and data driven explanations are perhaps the foremost. After early American influence on Pakistani sociology, now some German-trained sociologists are using theories imported from the German tradition (Javed, PI). Explanatory research in sociology is almost extinct. Only empirical trend-finding activity has been labelled as research. In the absence of properly trained sociologists, researchers not trained in sociology are conducting research on sociological matters, often adding confusion to the sociological explanations of social behaviour (Naeem, PI)

There was a general concern about the lack of indigenisation and locally relevant theories. For proper theorising on Pakistani social behaviour, the need for indigenous theories formulated in the local context was highlighted by many respondents in our study. They acknowledged that indigenous research does not simply exist on most of the issues 'We should generate more research findings to explain social problems typical of our society and should not make decisions based on research and theories born in foreign environment' (Jahangir, PI, Javed, PI). Until indigenous research is carried out, sustainability of the field of development and social change cannot be expected (Naeem, PI).

Pakistani society has undergone drastic changes resulting primarily from global influences and tendencies, including changes in demographic composition of communities and households, materialism, consumerism, fragmentation of the family, changes in gender roles and erosion of traditions. Planners and policy makers lack basic advocacy and research (Karim, PI) Lack of skills to conduct quality research is another contributory factor to abysmal situation of research.

The importance of indigenisation of sociological knowledge and theory was highlighted by Partha N Mukherji in his Welcome Address to the South Asia Workshop However, he cautioned that care must be taken as to not confuse indigenisation with parochialisation of social science. The process of indigenisation has to be in sync with the process of universalisation of social science [see Mukherji's paper in this issue]

Lack of Coaching by Faculty

The faculty time for coaching and research training is ever declining in sociology departments across Pakistan, as is evident from the student-faculty ratios. With the introduction of evening classes without additional faculty appointments, the departments cannot assure students sufficient

faculty time to groom them into young researchers and provide them necessary coaching time for guiding their research

Due to a general decline of research culture at the university level, students fail to internalise the habits of critical reading and creative writing. Even the Masters degree thesis is not a student's independent work. For instance, groups of three-to-five students at the sociology department of Punjab University complete a single thesis (Javed, PI)

The same is true about other sociology programmes in the country University of Peshawar also allows group theses of up to three students. In the University of Arid Agriculture, Rawalpindi, Masters thesis is for individuals, but it is optional. It appears that with rising demand of sociology as a discipline in recent years, the quality of research in students' theses is declining. Trained sociologists are not available to students and junior researchers as role models in research. Most of the senior researchers neither reward nor encourage the involvement of junior researcher as co-authors or even assistants.

The Role of Consultative and Evaluative Research

Constant research and its ongoing incorporation into curriculum are important for development of a discipline in terms of both teaching and research. With exceptions of efforts concentrated in some subareas, the research culture is nearly non-existent among sociologists, No sociologist in Pakistan has developed any substantial sociological theory. Several factors are responsible for this (Zaidi 2002). There is a general tendency among faculty to take up projects that are funded, which require their minimum involvement and time commitment, and which can be completed by their students. Such projects rarely lead to publications. Research on areas deserving attention but not of interest to funding agencies is non-existent.

Absence of Research Journals and Lack of Research Facilities

Currently, there is no journal in Pakistan exclusively devoted to the publication of research in sociology *The Pakistan Development Review* (*PDR*) is the only reputed journal that publishes research in demography and anthropology, but its focus is on development economics and related social sciences *PDR* is now in its forty-second volume (PIDE 2005)-

Lack of funding, library facilities and materials, computer labs, training and coaching are among major research constraints. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan is now actively taking steps to promote social science research. However, the HEC's desire to promote

research culture has not fully translated into action in the form of provision of funds and other necessary facilities. For instance, 'the sociology department at University of Balochistan at Quetta was established nearly 30 years ago. The computers were provided only last year, that is in 2004. Library does not have journals to facilitate research. This is the true reason behind lack of research interest at the national level' (Jahangir, PI). Allocation of more funds for research activities such as conferences, journals and field research can further sociology's cause (Shahzad, PI).

Research Ethics

Driven by selfish motives, insensitivity to biases and errors in research, and a host of other factors, sociological research in Pakistan is rife with violation of various codes of morality and ethics. In the countries with developed sociological programmes, researchers are sensitive to ethical issues in research (see for example, Gallagher, Creighton and Gibbons 1995, Applebaum 1996) In Pakistan, on the other hand, ethical issues in research have not been addressed. Veterans in the discipline tend to believe that poverty of sociological research is an offshoot of economic poverty and researchers' inability to stick their neck out when findings are against the interest of the ruling elite or society's power brokers (Jahangir, TI)

Ethical problems concerning sociological research in Pakistan fall under three broad categories: (i) violation of subjects' right to privacy, anonymity, prior consent for participation and choice of non-participation, (ii) data quality and integrity; and (iii) non-professional behaviour and dishonesty, including plagiarism

Human rights in Pakistan are ignored in general, and research is no exception (Amowitz et al 2003). Informed consent is hardly ever achieved in research involving human subjects. The problem is not a significant hurdle yet, particularly because of lack of awareness among the researchers as well as research subjects. This is a concern to address in future research by beginning to set standards for guarding human research subjects against violation of their basic rights to refusal to participate, privacy and confidentiality. Researchers are beginning to address the need for ethical guidelines and regulations concerning informed consent and other ethical issues in research (Bhutta 2002).

The second set of issues is about the insensitivity to integrity and quality of data Interviewers, generally unaware of the ethics in research, end up faking responses. This is typically a product of lack of interviewee's motivation and situational difficulties. Lack of motivation is

due to poor remuneration, and absence or ineffectiveness of interviewers' training and field supervision. Situational difficulties in field arise from absence of a general awareness among common people about the importance of research and its implications for them. Attaching due importance to interviewers' training and sensitizing them to the desirability of data quality are essential solutions to these problems.

The third set of issues is concerning researchers' dishonest and non-professional behaviour Facing a poor salary structure and a quest to amass wealth, many researchers take up consultative research and contract teaching. This leads them to compromise on quality of research Among the most important challenges to research is the unreasonably high teaching workload on faculty in both public and private universities leaving little time or motivation for research. In addition, there are examples of senior faculty using the students' and colleagues' research, without giving them due credit. Another major unethical tendency in research is cooking or doctoring the data, and dishonesty in interpretation. A possible solution to pull sociology out of this abysmal state is altruistic work by sociologists promoted through collective dialogue on the matter (Mann, TI)

An aftermath of the absence of research culture and violation of research ethics is non-availability of accurate data. It is hard to find consensus in the research community, even on basic estimates of measures that are relevant to policy, such as population growth rate or life expectancy at birth Universities need to promote practices leading to quality data collection Creating data repositories for easy accessibility to legitimate users at universities and to practitioners and policy makers can help facilitate social research and elevate the importance of sociological research (Javed, PI)

Vested Interests

With its roots perhaps in the general wave of consumerism and materialism currently encompassing Pakistani society (Bari 2004, Shah 2004), sociologists pursue research projects and teaching assignments suiting their own self-interest Although Pakistani culture is known for its collectivity in the cross-cultural research (Darwish and Huber 2003), individualism is evident in teaching, research, and application of sociology by Pakistani sociologists Collectivism, that is highly desirable for any discipline to flourish, is missing in the community of Pakistani sociologists Self-interests drive and direct research Lack of passion and organisation prevents any systematic progress in the discipline (Mann, TI; M Ahmad, PI, Javed, PI) The missionary zeal, patience, and availa-

bility to junior colleagues and students that are essential ingredients for proper grooming and coaching of students have diminished considerably

Quality of Education in Sociology

Sociology student's quality came under a critical focus of several key informants. Shortage of faculty, stemming from evening programmes, is just one contributory factor to such poor quality. Driven primarily by monetary gains, evening programmes at the public universities and large size of daytime classes are responsible for poor quality students. Evening classes, more often than not, are offered for students who cannot qualify for admission on merit but are financially well-off to pay fees ten-to-twenty times greater than the regular day classes. Corruption, favouritism, and ability to influence examiners are also contributory factors to the poor quality of education. To make the matters complicated, HEC has been recently promoting PhD-level education at local institutions that are generally not equipped with faculty, knowledge base and facilities to award PhDs. Some sociologists tend to believe that if dignity of the system is to be restored, local PhDs should be only awarded to exceptionally good candidates (Jahangir, TI)

Quality of Applicants for Sociology Programmes

Quality of the students produced by any institution is a function of the quality of faculty and more importantly, that of the pool of candidates applying for the programme Unfortunately, driven primarily by the market forces, post-high-school screening process prevalent historically in Pakistan (but more so since the mid-1970s) leaves the leftovers low accomplishers for sociology and other such social sciences. At least, that is the stereotypical image of social sciences in Pakistan.

Parents and students alike chose their area of study targeting employment prospects, rather than student's aptitude or interests. Equipped with no knowledge of the job market, parents of toppers and accomplishers send their daughters and sons to lucrative fields such as computer science, engineering, medicine and commerce. Armed forces attract the next best, leaving only those for arts, humanities and social sciences who fail to get admission and selection into fields that are more desirable. As a result, students in other disciplines, including sociology, are perceived by the market forces to be inferior as compared with the 'superior' ones selected by the other fields. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy for the sociologist trained locally. Graduate programmes in sociology justify their inability to produce better quality students as they have to work

with students, majority of whom have modest career ambitions, poor work ethics, and poor commitment to studies 'People perceive this [sociology] to be an easy subject Therefore, they expect to earn a degree without much effort' (Hafeez, PI)

Sociology at the College Level

HEC is partially responsible for the neglect of sociology at college level in that HEC has not taken serious interest in properly organising and reshaping the two-year BSc programme, as its emphasis has been on university-level programmes rather than those of the college level Although it is desirable to change BA and BSc degrees to be of four years' duration after higher secondary, there have been arguments such as girls will not study in four-year programmes. Convinced of such baseless concerns, such change to standardise education along global patterns has not occurred (Habibullah, PI)

More college-level affiliation of university-level sociology programmes needs to be introduced. Students coming to university are generally not aware of sociology's existence (Khan, TI) This lack of recognition has been costing sociologists in terms of loss of job opportunities, as social work majors are taken these days for what are actually sociologists' jobs (Habibullah, PI)

Shortage of Quality Faculty

Associated primarily with 'quality' of available pool of candidates, a general shortage of faculty exists in sociology programmes (see Table 2) For instance, in Punjab University, there are only two PhD-level regular faculty members, and a total of five faculty members. With some help from faculty from other disciplines, the Department is offering five programmes. Masters in Sociology (regular), Masters in Sociology evening (self-financed), BA Honours in Sociology, Masters in NGO Studies, and Masters in Population Studies Undoubtedly, shortage of faculty is among the most important of the challenges to sociology as a discipline in Pakistan as there is a serious mismatch between the increasing enrolment of students in colleges and the number of vacancies of teachers (R Ahmed, PI)

Majority of the sociologists interviewed mentioned faculty shortage to be a major concern. As shown in Table 2, at the time of our survey, there were in all of nine Professors, six Associate Professors, and sixteen Assistant Professors in the nine sociology departments in Pakistan. The shortage is evident from the fact that only a total of nine foreign qualified

Table 2 Level and number of faculty in sociology departments in Pakistani universities 2005

University	Professor		Associate		Assistant		Lecturer/	
ĺ			Professo	7	Professor		Visiting faculty	
	Apvd	Actl	Apvd	Actl	Apvd	Actl	Apvd	Actl
Punjab University, Lahore	1	1	2	1	3	1	4	2
Karachı University	4	2	4	1	6	3	3	2 (+ 2 co-, operative teachers)
University of Agriculture, Faisalabad	1	2	4	1	1	3	3	5
University of Peshawar	2	0	3	0	5	2	4	4 (+ 2 visiting)
University of Balochistan	1	i	2	0	3	3	-	7 '
University of Sindh, Jamshoro	-	3	-	2		1	-	4
BZ University, Multan	1	0	1	0	2	1	6	6 (4 per- manent + 2 visit- ing)
University of Arid Agriculture, Rawalpindi	-	0	-	1	-	2	-	5
Total	-	9	-	6	-	16		30

Source Interviews listed in Appendix I
Note Apvd = Approved and Acti = Actual

PhD-level sociologists are currently working in sociology programmes in the public universities. In addition, an equal number (nine) of locally trained PhDs in sociology were also working in these universities, making the total number of PhDs working in the sociology departments of the country merely eighteen. The distribution of faculty by various university programmes and level of training clearly demonstrates such shortage (see Table 3).

The ratio of student to faculty is an important quantitative indicator of faculty shortage (or adequacy thereof) In the universities offering at

least a Masters degree in sociology, the average overall student to PhD faculty ratio in sociology departments is 128. There is wide variation across universities, ranging from 48 students per PhD faculty at the University of Arid Agriculture to 662 at the Peshawar University, and there is no PhD faculty at the BZ University, Multan It should be clarified that visiting faculty has not been included in these numbers. The overall student-faculty ratio in all sociology departments in Pakistan is 27, counting both PhD and non-PhDs. Again, there is wide variation across universities, as shown in Table 3.

Causes of Faculty Shortage

Numerous cultural, economic, and political factors play a role in shortage of sociology faculty First, there is a shortage of qualified teachers at the university level in most disciplines Second, teaching requires intellectual maturity and creativity, and constant quest of self-development With the skill level gained at public universities, sociology graduates may not qualify and feel confident in taking up university level teaching Consequently, most sociology graduates take up mundane jobs, such as conducting survey interviews. Third, sociology students going for studies abroad are less likely to return to Pakistan, resulting in brain drain (Naeem, PI). Fourth, while females take up teaching in sociology, men go for better paying jobs (Munawar, PI) Foreign educated sociologists generally take up employment in lucrative fields outside the discipline Others seek and find employment with foreign-funded projects instead of seeking teaching positions. To make the matter worse, the hiring and postgraduation admission practices are rife with nepotism, favouritism, and departmental politics This leaves positions vacant, on the one hand, and qualified students underemployed, on the other (Anonymous TI) Fifth, many foreign-trained sociologists sell themselves in a subspecialty with better salary structure or job opportunity For instance, senior sociologist Mehtab Karım stated that he sells himself as a demographer due to his subspecialty in demography rather than as a sociologist, the discipline in which he has his PhD. Finally, inbreeding is another problematic aspect of sociology programmes The sociology programme at Karachi University, one of the two oldest programmes in the country, is suffering from severe inbreeding (Karim, PI)

Quality Text Books and Curriculum

Since last two decades, not more than five sociology books have been written as undergraduate textbooks, of which the two most projected are

Table 3 Enrolment ratio at sociology departments in Pakistani universities 2005

University	Number of	Number of	faculty	Student-faculty ratio (Number of students/faculty)		
	students	PhD Foreign	PhD local	Other	PhD faculty	All faculty
Punjab University, Lahore	446 (232 Masters + 156 BA Hons + 33 MPS + 25 PhD)*	2	0	3+3 con- tract	223	56
Sindh University, Jamshoro, Sindh	410 (100 MA + 310 BA Hons)	0	2	8	205	41
University of Peshawar	662 (120 MA + 318 BA Hons + 15 MPhil + 3 PhD + 106 MA Anthropology +	0	1.	7	662	83
University of Karachi	100 evening) 465 (85 MA, 30 MPhil/PhD + 350 BA Hons)	0	3,	5	155	58 1
University of Agriculture, Faisalabad	347 (145 MA evening+ 130 Rural+72 PhD)	3	0	8	116	32
B Z University, Multan	90 (77 MSc + 13 MPhil)	0	0	8	-	11
Balochistan University, Quetta	131 (130 M A+ 1 MPhil + 0 BA Hons)	0	1	10	131	12
University of Arid Agriculture, Rawalpindi	143 MA (71 Sociology + 72 Anthropology)	2	1	5	48	18
Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad **		2	0	-	-	-
Total	2694	9	8	57	158	36

Source Interviews listed in Appendix I

Note * Visiting faculty are hired to teach some courses in BA Hons, ** Local/regional education office does not have statistics on faculty from other colleges and universities

by Abdul Hameed Tagga (2003) and Zahid Saeed and Ahmed Farooq (1999) The senior author of this paper tried one of these textbooks for one of his undergraduate sociology courses and had to drop it the next quarter on students' complaint against the poor quality referencing and

poor readability These and other textbooks, borrow heavily from American/European textbooks (Jahangir, PI) Obviously, there is a gap between materials presented in western books being used at Pakistani universities and the real social issues in Pakistan 'Systematic and concerted efforts are needed to bridge this gap by having Pakistani sociologists write quality books to fit our society's needs' (Ejaz, PI) In addition to lack of choice, books are costly. Teachers' salaries in the public sector universities are meagre. Buying personal copies of books is neither a norm, nor is it financially possible (Jahangir, TI) Reading books from library seems a logical alternative, but library books rarely suit students' or faculty's needs because they are hardly ever relevant Books are bought to please the publishers rather than to meet students' need (Jahangir, TI, Naeem, PI) Most sociologists do not pay attention to writing sociology books because funds, support and help are not available (Hafeez, PI)

Many programmes follow the same curriculum taught thirty years ago, and they do not touch upon recent developments in conceptualisation, theory and methods. Syllabi have never been revised on progressive lines (M Ahmad, PI). The syllabus does not get updated due to disinterestedness on the part of universities Javed Ali states his experiences as on insider of the curriculum wing, Punjab Textbook Board

Before 2002, national level curriculum in the subject of sociology was available but not yet approved by the curriculum wing. It was prepared and got approved. Generally, all universities showed disinterestedness to participate in the meeting on curriculum held at national level in Islamabad except Balochistan University. Punjab University sent written comments only (PI)

Discipline's Inability to Attract and Retain Excellence

When one thinks of sociology as a discipline in Pakistan, mediocrity immediately comes as an appropriate concept to describe its situation. Due primarily to lack of recognition of its functional needs, sociology as a discipline has been unable to attract and retain foreign-trained Pakistani sociologists either within the discipline or in Pakistan Market forces serve as a pull factor and poor working conditions, and general inability to reward excellence in monetary terms or otherwise as push factors to motivate individual to seek employment abroad, mostly in non-academic settings. The senior author knows few a cases of foreign-trained sociologists who became victims to unfriendly work environment and salary structures, finally leaving for abroad. A senior sociologist gave a serious chance to Pakistani sociology, but eventually moved back to USA where he had initially faced job problems

Opportunities and Future Directions

Sociology was introduced relatively late in Pakistan, but it progressed fairly well in the first three decades of its existence, beginning formally in the mid-1950s. After the mid-1980s, inactivity of existing forum and lack of collaborations and partnerships created a snowball effect, leading to a host of challenges listed in the previous sections. By 'regrouping', the sociology community in Pakistan ought to revitalise a forum to exchange ideas and promote opportunities toward better teaching and research environment, in order to put their 'strayed' discipline back on track to development and planned growth. The debate on the direction taken by the discipline historically has recently recurred, which should be used as a springboard. Some concrete opportunities are listed below.

First, all stakeholders in sociology need to come together and debate on the systematic change and growth of sociology as a discipline and then influence the institutions concerned to implement the desired changes (Habibullah, PI) Sociologists should create centres of excellence in sociology. These centres should help coordinate funding, training and connectivity to facilitate the flow of information (Hafeez, PI). Education departments and government functionaries should be made aware of the importance of sociology so that technical knowledge could be advanced to combat social evils (Ahmad, PI).

Recent changes in Pakistani society have paved the way to better job prospects for the sociologist. As discussed earlier, sociologists can get jobs in various capacities in public, private, or NGO sectors (Naeem, PI) Sociologists are working as teachers, probation officers, parole officers, social welfare officers (Mujtaba, PI) Sociology is stereotypically considered a soft subject requiring less analytical and more verbal skills. The latent function of such biased view is that it attracts more women than men 'Gender balance is the positive aspect of the bias against sociology. Last two years, there were 75 percent girls, 25 percent boys in the Department [of Sociology, University of the Punjab]. Now there are 60 percent girls and 40 percent boys' (Munawar, PI). There is hope that with the increasing enrolment and the emerging need for sociological studies, sociology will get more recognition.

Globalisation, Social Change and the Importance of Sociology

Pakistani society is going through rapid social transformation, creating a greater need for sociological research. Globalisation and the new world order are a reason for expansion in sociology's scope Sociological research can give direction to the future growth and development of the

society In addition, the change provides an ability to break with its past and put sociology to our services in a planned way. While spontaneous change might lead to unforeseen and undesirable consequences, planned change is often desirable for healthy functioning of the societies. Pakistani society has developed rigidly with tradition and religion being the defining forces. However, the changing milieu can be used to popularise sociology for modernisation and enlightenment (Hafeez, TI). Pakistani society is full of issues such as nepotism, corruption, bribery, and sectarianism. Sociologists can play an important role in alleviating tensions in socioeconomic institutions (Jahangir, TI).

Sociological knowledge has powers to predict future social changes and suggest ways to cope with such changes Sociologists can develop models to understand novel and emergent situations. They can discover and share patterns of changing norms and attitudes. The indigenous sociological knowledge can be incorporated to further facilitate many social processes. Now the Government of Pakistan is triggering directed socioeconomic change. For example, HEC has a billion rupee budget to develop leadership so that we can give direction to change (Hafeez, TI, Zahid, PI)

Other Opportunities and Future Directions

NGOs are beginning to play a variety of roles in developing societies like Pakistan, such as advocacy, service delivery of basic life chances, and innovation to bring about social transformation (Shah, Bari and Ejaz 2005) The NGO sector has given greater value to sociologists' work Through quality work with NGOs, sociologists can regain credibility (M Ahmad, PI)

Many organisations networking with international organisations or working as a part of an international network are beginning to promote sociology as a disciple Sociologists must actively seek out such opportunities and capitalise on them Population Council is planning to establish Population Centres for research and teaching in demography in all the major sociology departments in Pakistan (Munawar, PI)

Numerous other recent happenings can be taken as signs of life for the future of sociology on Pakistan For instance, HEC has recognised that social sciences, including sociology, have been ignored till recently, and there are plans to give a vibrant push and dynamism to the social sciences and the humanities sector Several steps are proposed, such as establishing a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), offering scholarships to university teachers for doctoral studies in sociology and other social Sciences, and forging Pak-French

research collaboration in social sciences Private universities are beginning to offer monetary rewards to their faculty for the published research Public universities are planning to offer tenure-track positions to faculty members having a good publication record with salaries as much as double their existing ones.

Sociology should be taught as a compulsory subject in all the disciplines involving public administration, and to doctors, Central Superior Services (CSS) officers, managers, and research professionals Suggestions and recommendations from sociologists can guarantee a better social policy for the country (Wassan, TI)

An insight from a senior sociologist from India, who has a fairly good understanding of the neighbouring cultures, hints at productive future directions. Satish Saberwal (PI) agrees that a productive framework for the field remains to be visualised, and the first step is to have a conception of this particular society before figuring out how to study it Use of comparative literature in social anthropology – especially tribal societies of the kind present in NWFP and Balochistan – can be helpful In sociology, in the orthodox sense, in Pakistan and India (and Bangladesh, too), advantage should be taken of the fact that we are together uniquely heirs to three civilisations European, Islamic and Indic We owe it to our students to introduce them to all three - in what depth would depend on the students' level and the teachers' capabilities. We have to see each civilisation as a human artefact, created through human effort in particular historical and ecological circumstances, and helping its bearers in coping with the vicissitudes of history, great and small Then, of course, there would be the whole range of things on sociological theories, research methods, and whatever topics seem necessary on the spot One advantage of an ambitious conception of this kind would be that it would rid the field off its image of being a soft option!

Appendix I List of key informants interviewed

	T =	,	Y
Name and qualification	Date of	Interviewer	Title and affiliation
quantication	interview	and	
		interview method	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
M Naeem,	4 February	2 PI	Associate Professor (Retired) and
MA Sociology	2005		former Head, Department of
			Sociology, Punjab University, Lahore
Zakrıa Zakır	3 February	1 PI	Associate Professor and Chair,
PhD	2005	İ	Department of Sociology, Punjab
			University, Lahore
Mohammad	15	1 PI	Professor, Department of Sociology,
Hafeez PhD	February	ļ	Punjab University, Lahore
Rıffat	2005	1 and 2 PI	A
Munawar	February	I and 2 PI	Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Punjab University, Lahore
Minimawai	2005		Sociology, Pullab University, Lanore
Mehtab Karım	4	1 PI + TI	Professor of Demography and Head
PhD	February		Population and Reproductive Health
	2005		Programme, Aga Khan University,
			Karachi
Sultan Alam	6	2 TI	Associate Professor (Retired) and
Usmanı	February		former Head, Department of
4 - 377	2005	1	Sociology, Punjab University, Lahore
Aijaz Wassan	10 February	1 TI + E	Lecturer, Department of Sociology
	February 2005		Punjab University, Lahore and Sindh
Faroog Tanvir,	February	1 TI	University, Jamshoro, Sindh Associate Professor, Deparetment of
PhD	14 2005	1 11	Sociology and Anthropology,
(Australia)			University of Arid Agriculture,
			Rawalpındı
Rashid Khan,	5	1 TI	Assistant Professor and Acting
PhD	February		Chairman, Department of Sociology,
	2005		University of Peshawar
Rana Saba PhD	8	1 TI	Assistant Professor, Department of
PID	February 2005		Sociology, University of Karachi
Ishfaq Ahmad	14	1 TI	Associate Professor, Department of
Mann	February	* * * *	Rural Sociology, University of
PhD (UK)	2004	- 1	Agriculture, Faisalabad
Arabab M	9	1 TI	Department of Sociology and
Jehangeer	February	ļ	Chairperson, Department of Sociology,
PhD	2005		Balochistan University, Quetta
Nadia Ejaz	15	1 PI	Teaching Fellow, Department of
MS (Social	February		Social Sciences, Lahore University of
Anthropology) (McGill	2005		Management Sciences
University)	ļ		
Oniversity)			

	,		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Imtiaz	8 February	1 TI	Assistant Professor and Coordinator of
Waraitch	2005		Sociology Programme, B Z
MA Sociology			University, Multan
Saadat Faruq	4	2 PI	Assistant Professor of Sociology,
Zahid	February	ĺ	Government Intermediate College,
MA Sociology	2005		Mustafa Abad, District Kasur
Nadeem	5	2 PI	Assistant Professor of Sociology,
Sahzad	February		Government College, Jhelum
MA Sociology	2005		
Mustajab	3	2 PI	Assistant Professor of Sociology,
Ahmad Ahmad	February		Government College of Science,
MA Sociology	2005		Lahore
Raı Faız	5	2 PI	Associate Professor of Sociology,
Ahmad	February		Government College, Bhai Pheru,
MA Sociology	2005		Kasur
Amjad Javed	4	2 PI	Lecturer of Sociology, Government
MA Sociology	February		College University (GCU), Lahore
	2005		1
Anonymous	5	1 TI	Sociologist, identity concealed on
!	February		request
	2005		
Javed Alı	7	2 PI	Deputy Director, Punjab Textbook
Chaudhury	February		Board, Curriculum Wing, Lahore
	2005		3,
Syed Rafay	27	1 PI + E	Student, Department of Social
Ahmed	January		Sciences, Lahore University of
BSc Hons	2005		Management Sciences
Habibullah	15	1 PI + TI	Vice Chancellor and the author of the
PhD	February		5-year education plan, University of
	2005		Education, Lahore
Inayatullah Ch	26	1 PI	Council of Social Sciences, Islamabad
Ph D	February		and President, Managing Trustee,
	2005		Trust for Global Peace
Satish	February	1 PI + E	Professor (Retired), Centre for
Saberwal	2005		Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru
Ph D	ľ	i	University, Delhi
Partha Nath	February	1 PI	President, Indian Sociological Society
Mukherji	2005		
Nazrul Islam	February	1 PI	Bangladesh
PhD	2005		5
	4005		<u> </u>

Note 1 = Interview by Gulzar H Shah, and 2 = Interview by Asif H Qureshi, PI = Personal interview, TI = Telephone interview, and E = E-mail correspondence

Appendix II Details of conferences by Pakistan Sociological Association

Conference number	Year	President	Conference theme	Place
1 st	1964	M S Jilani	Substantive areas of sociology	Karachi University, Karachi
2 nd	1965	Hassan Nawaz Gardezi	Relevant applied research and new substantive areas of sociology	Punjab University, Lahore
3 rd	1966	A K Nazmul Karım	Rural development, basic democracy and rural sociology	Punjab University, Khanspur
4 th	1967	Haider Alı Chaudharı	The analysis of sociology as a science or profession	Government Degree College, Abbottabad
5 th	1968	Haider Ali Chaudhari	Sociology and development of human resources	Karachi University, Karachi
6 th	1970	Sultan Hashmı	Rights and obligations of sociologists Theory and methodology	Punjab University, Lahore
7 th	1972	Sultan Hashmı	Methodology, family planning, rural and urban development	Punjab University, Lahore
8 th	1973	Sultan Hashmı	Sociology today in Pakistan	Karachi University, Karachi
9 th	1975	M Sabihudin Baqai	Poverty Sociological perspective	Punjab University, Khanaspur
10 th	1977	M Anwar-ul- Haq	Drug addiction and rehabilitation of addicts	University of Agriculture, Faisalabad
11 th	1979 - 1980	Abdur Rauf	Sociology of sales and marketing	Punjab University, Lahore
12 th	1982	M Iqbal Chaudhary	-	Quaid-1-Azam University, Islamabad
13 th	1985	Habib A Mufti	-	Peshawar University, Peshawar

Source Munawar (2005) and published proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of Pakistan Sociological Association, 4-5 December 1985 (cited in Hafeez [2001])

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- (PI = Personal interview and TI = Telephone interview, see Appendix I)
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Sociology in Bangladesh: Search for a New Frontier

S. Aminul Islam and Nazrul Islam

Sociology today faces an extraordinary crisis all over the world. The nature of this crisis is manifold and it varies from country to country and region to region. There is now growing awareness that sociology can move ahead through the blooming of a plurality of local traditions and through local-global pathways. The objective of this paper is to examine the crisis of sociology in Bangladesh and map the future direction that the discipline should take there. This paper argues that sociological discourses tend to flourish in their specific social terrains like other discourses. The history of sociology in Bangladesh reflects its social structure and political undercurrents and its location within the global system. Reflexivity does allow sociologists to look beyond their current discourses and carve out new ideas and research traditions. Sociology in Bangladesh, or in South Asia, should actively search for a new horizon—a horizon of intense professional interaction and of new ideas and new ways of doing sociology by deploying the new information technology.

Analytical Framework

Alvın Gouldner (1970), ın tracıng the crisis of sociological theory, shows that it was the nature of the middle class that shaped the discourse of sociology in the West Sociology was born in the conflict between the restored nobility and the middle class Although the positivistic sociology. was created by men from the dispossessed aristocracy, it specially, appealed the generation of early nineteenth century that was equally distant from the revolution and the counter-revolution and that found its existential faith in the growing worldview of science or positivism. The evolutionary sociology was shaped by the ascendant middle class of Great Britain in the course of an expanding empire Functionalism emerged after World War 1, when the British middle class no longer had confidence in its growth, and its main concern was to contain the unrest in the colonies Functionalism was reshaped and expanded by Talcott, Parsons in response to the deep crisis of the middle class during the era of Great Depression and the threat of communism. The rise of new bourgeoisie in the 1970s signalled the entropy of functionalism Erving Goffman 'represented the obituary for the old bourgeois virtues and a

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celebration of the new ones' (*Ibid* 383) 'The new middle class seeks to cope with the attenuation of its conventional standards of utility and morality by retreating from both and by seeking to fix its perspective in aesthetic standards, in the appearance of things' (*Ibid* 390) Gouldner's own effort at creating a reflexive sociology has been branded as a mere self-portrait (O'Neill 1972) John O'Neill also charged that sociology was a 'skin trade', involved more in status management through collection and manipulation of irrelevant data. Although sociology faced serious criticism in the 1960s, it was only in the 1970s that it was clear that sociology was also a discourse that legitimated the western hegemony of the world. The social world was limited to a handful of western countries, and the rest of the world did not matter. It did not simply exist or, if it existed at all, it was bound to be like the West in the long run. The non-West was irrational and pathological (Said 1978, Sardar 2002)

Thirty-five years after Gouldner advanced his view of the impending crisis in sociology, it is clear that the discipline now faces a dead end Even a standard history of sociological theory described that paradigms in sociology remained 'comatose' and they were unable to produce knowledge any better than common sense (Bottomore and Nisbet 1979). The sense of frustration has deepened over time. Sociological theory has gone astray. It has lost most of its social and intellectual importance (Seidman 1995, 407). Norman K. Denzin also came to the same conclusion and called for efforts at a deeper understanding of the crisis. 'To not confront this challenge is to risk annihilation by the social' (1995, 405). And the risk of annihilation is very much there on the horizon (S. Aminul Islam 1999, Nazrul Islam 2005a). Can we confront this challenge from the South? This will require a reflexive analysis of our own sociological traditions and mapping an appropriate direction for future sociological research for Bangladesh and the region.

The Social Context of Sociology

Sociology, it is to be noted, was implanted into Bangladesh – a peripheral society characterised by internal colonialism by an international agency. The development of sociology suffered due to its intellectual genealogy and its political context. The political climate and political crisis of the Pakistan period proved to be a negative milieu for the growth of the discipline. The post-independence Bangladesh has again faced serious political difficulties in its search for institutionalised democracy. The growth of the middle class has largely been in the form of a rentier class that has benefited from economic windfalls of a booty capitalism and pervasiveness of patron-clientelism in the political sphere

(Khan, Islam and Haque 1996) It has resulted in de-institutionalisation of the higher education. There has been a general decline of the quality of education Sociology has failed to develop a creative discursive tradition because of its imported origin and of an intellectual milieu of a rentier class that has sought to transform sociological knowledge into an inviolable dead tradition (S Aminul Islam 1999) The discipline has mainly served the status mobility of the scholars rather than leading to an accumulation of knowledge

Sociologists in Bangladesh are looking forward to find a way out of this crisis and move towards a new pathway of sociological knowledge This would, of course, require a critical review of the sociological tradition of the country, which is presented below

Development of Sociology as an Academic Discipline

Sociology was formally introduced in colonial India in 1917 at the University of Kolkata Within less than a decade, the subject began to be offered at the recently established University of Dhaka. The Department of Philosophy introduced the teaching of sociology, in 1926, as part of a course entitled 'Ethics and Sociology' It turned out to be a great stride for the discipline when sociology was introduced as a full course in the Department of Political Science in the beginning of 1940s. As it transpired, the first batch of the local faculty in the later independent Department of Sociology was political scientists by training (Rangalal Sen 1984)

In 1950, Claude Levi-Strauss came to Dhaka as a UNESCO representative and recommended the setting up of a department of sociology As a consequence, the UNESCO sponsored a fully operational Department of Sociology at the University of Dhaka in 1957, with teaching staff from Europe and the United States of America. That Department, with an all-Bangladeshi staff, began functioning ten years later. Departments of sociology were opened at the University of Rajshahi in the late 1960s and the University of Chittagong in the early 1970s. Soon, sociology was also introduced in some of the major colleges.

In recent years, sociology departments have started functioning at the Sahajalal University of Science and Technology, Khulna University of Science and Technology, and the Open University There is also a Department of Rural Sociology at the Bangladesh Agricultural University at Mymensingh, and sociology is also taught as a minor course in a few of the recently founded private universities and as undergraduate and graduate programmes in a large number of colleges affiliated with the National University Thus, after less than fifty years of its functioning as

an independent discipline in Bangladesh, there is no dearth of 'sociologists' in the country, despite the fact that sociology as a discipline has made little headway

Teaching Sociology

This lack of growth is best exemplified in the way sociological discourse has developed in the country S Aminul Islam's (1990) critical review of sociology courses taught at the University of Dhaka explains the situation Examining the introductory course, he shows that, except for the addition or subtraction of one topic or another, no fundamental change occurred for some thirty years. What worried him most was that the course continued to list texts and reference books as old as Edward Carey Hayes' Introduction to the Study of Sociology (1915) or Pitirim A Sorokin's Contemporary Sociological Theories (1928) Similarly, other courses were dated, though a few had been added or dropped now and then with a total number of (one-year) courses hovering around a dozen for the one-year graduate and the three-year undergraduate levels combined with little or no alternatives available until the middle of 1980s.

The course contents remained highly theoretical and uninteresting with little possibility of their ever becoming useful outside the classroom For example, the course on social thought contained a three-page list of books from Kautilya's Arthashastra to Popper's Open Society and its Enemies and Marcuse's Eros and Civilization with all major Greek. Roman, later European, American and even some Arab and Indian thinkers thrown in One commentator argued that it would require all three of the undergraduate years to read through just this one course Other courses, similarly, had two- or three-page long lists of dated books with very little rationale for their selection or connection with the topics defining the course content The topics themselves remained unchanged over the years and took little cognisance of the developments elsewhere. Moreover, the list of courses defining the discipline, their contents and the reading materials were treated almost as sacrosanct and even hints at changes were frowned upon Thus, the graduates of sociology were reading hardly anything more than their elder counterparts thirty years ago or any thing much different from political science or history graduates This ossification of the discourse was at the root of the failure of the discipline to play a dynamic role in the accumulation of knowledge and policy-making Other universities and colleges simply followed the programme of the University of Dhaka, and similarly failed to make much impression on the society or the state

Fortunately, however, beginning from the late 1980s, the picture began to change for the better Thanks to a handful of enterprising sociologists trained in the western universities, not only has the number of courses taught in Bangladesh, and the University of Dhaka in particular, multiplied many times over, but also the content of those courses closely resemble the offerings in other parts of the world Presently, the students at the University of Dhaka are expected to select and read twenty one-year courses in the undergraduate programme from a list of over fifty courses and four from a list of another fifteen at the Masters level A semester system with forty required courses, equivalent to 120 credits, was introduced at the University of Dhaka, but was soon put on hold due to opposition from a group of students

In these recent changes, the courses offered have taken into account both the current growth areas of the discipline and the job market within the country. These courses include areas like Third World development, demography, environment, gender studies, poverty, inequality, ageing, etc. They are also tuned to the latest developments in theory and methodology. Thus, now sociology graduates have a greater range of employment opportunities compared to graduates from most other fields, and they are finding placements in the numerous NGOs, research organisations and as consultants in many international and multinational organisations. Much of this growth and qualitative changes have occurred only during the past ten years or so, and innovative experiments have now become a part of the curriculum at the University of Dhaka, which continues to lead in such matters.

Sociological Research

Given the grim picture of classroom-based sociology in Bangladesh, it is quite laudable that, though by a small number, mainly from the teaching community, the sociologists, often overshadowed by economists, anthropologists or even geographers, have managed to contribute in many areas of the discipline and have been able to keep abreast with the developments abroad. This is particularly commendable because there is practically no fund or incentives available to the researcher. Institutional or organisational backing in the form of research grants, regular journals and even proper library facilities are also largely missing in the academic institutions. It is just personal commitment that keeps the researcher going

When, in 1957, the Department of Sociology was established, sociological reading materials, with the exception of AKN Karim's Changing Society in India and Pakistan (1956), were in short supply

Not long afterward, four important works (Maron 1957, Bessignet 1960, Owen 1962, Afsaruddin 1964) attempted to chart a course for sociological research in Bangladesh These gave some impetus to social research in the country Karim stressed upon historical and anthropological methods for the study of Bangladesh society Both because of this fact and because Bangladesh was predominantly a rural society, the social research in the country centred mainly on village studies with a blurring of disciplinary distinction

Rural Sociology

With or without the sociologists, the major area of social research in Bangladesh has remained the village studies. This has been an area vere professionals from various disciplines and from various countries joined hands. Sociologists using ethnographic techniques have conducted some of these studies. Anthropologists, economists, political scientists, scholars from other disciplines, and journalists have taken part in exploring the rural society of Bangladesh. This has given rise to an impressive body of research on rural society (Bertocci 2002). One bibliographical study found 594 items – including books, articles and research reports between 1942 and 1986 (Saqui and Akhter 1987). Shapan Adnan (1990) found that most village studies were conducted between 1974 and 1986. In fact, there has been a marked decline in village studies from the mid-1980s and the trend continues.

It was Ramkrishna Mukherjee (1971) who undertook the first landmark work in rural sociology in 1942-43 in six villages in the northern part of the country Although his works were published in the 1940s and 1950s, they were hardly known until the 1970s From 1960 on, the impetus for rural sociology came from the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development at Comilla The Academy became operational in 1960 and was soon able to draw international attention under the dynamic leadership of Akhter Hamid Khan Particularly important was its relationship with the Michigan State University (Bertocci 2002) Several of these early studies in Comilla were path breaking S A Qadir (1960) traced three generations of land-use pattern in a Comilla village SA Rahim (1965) undertook a pioneering study in the area of diffusion of innovations Hafez SM Zaidi (1970) undertook a socio-psychological study of cultural change in two Comilla villages in the late 1960s. In the mid-1960s, Peter J Bertocci was one of the Michigan State University students to arrive in this hinterland of former Pakistan and he produced the most influential ethnographic account of rural Bangladesh in 1970 (Bertocci 1970, 1996)

After independence, there grew a strong interest in the study of villages. These studies, however, were more anthropological than sociological in nature. A number of young economists and historians established a Village Study Group and undertook studies focusing on the village power structure (Bertocci 2002, S. Aminul Islam 2002a). The Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies and the Institute of Bangladesh Studies at the University of Rajshahi played an important role exploring the rural society. Some of the young Bangladeshi sociologists a...o undertook to look back at the villages (Bhuiyan 1978). At the same time, a young British sociologist, Geoff Wood, came to Comilla and began his long personal association, later through the University of Bath, with Bangladesh studies. Wood and his students have produced some of the most important studies on Bangladesh society. Although many of these studies were anthropological in nature, they provided powerful sociological accounts of the rural society.

Several of the key themes, which emerged in the course of these researches, were the nature of informal social structure – *shamay*, dynamics of agrarian change, and the pattern of power structure Bertocci (1970) developed the idea of institutional atomism – an essentialist and static analysis – that seems to have powerfully influenced the subsequent studies of rural social structure. He argued that the ecology of Bengal delta did not allow the formation of villages with fixed boundaries and institutional development in villages. The informal *shamay* or council of elders was the only institution that served as the fulcrum of rural life A K M. Aminul Islam (1974) used the functionalist perspective to map conflict and cohesion in village. Jennek Arens and Jos van Beurden (1977) and Betsy Hartman and James Boyce (1983) provided an account of the fragile livelihoods in deltaic plains.

Another concern that attracted the attention of some social scientists, especially Marxists, was the direction of agrarian change and the nature of mode of production in agriculture B K Jahangir (1979) and Atiur Rahman (1986) undertook to show the process of class differentiation and polarisation in the rural society. Willem van Schendel (1981) and Shakeeb Adnan Khan (1989) took an opposite stand on the issue. The debate ended inconclusively. The issue of power became of particular concern as some studies found that traditional elites or youth gangs were dominating the countryside, making the delivery of developmental inputs difficult (S. Aminul Islam 1989).

Several of the villages have been restudied and they provide significant data on recent changes in rural Bangladesh (Shapan Adnan 1997, Thorp 1978, Siddiqui 2000, Westergaard 1980, Westergaard and Hossain 2005) Shapan Adnan has provided an important account of the changing

nature of *shamaj* and *shalish* in the villages of the northern part of the country Siddiqui has meticulously documented the changing poverty situation in a Jessore village over two decades Westergaard and Hossain have traced the impact of Green Revolution on rural life and changes in the power structure S Aminul Islam (2000b) has also indicated the key aspects of recent changes in the livelihoods of four villages in Bangladesh through a rapid appraisal study

A large number of these studies, however, are in the form of action research and evaluation reports Md Afsar Hossain Saqui and Kha Akhter (1987) report that most of these studies were descriptive and they mainly used univariate statistical analysis Saqui and Akhter found only one study that used multivariate statistical analysis A more serious shortcoming of these village studies was that they provided disjointed snapshots. These studies have not contributed much towards understanding of the macro context of rural social structure and its change, and trends and patterns of rural livelihoods and development of micro-macro theoretical integration. In spite of a promising start at the Bangladesh Academy of Rural Development, a rigorous research tradition in rural sociology has failed to develop in Bangladesh.

Theory and Method

It should not be surprising that sociologists in Bangladesh have concerned themselves little with theory and method Most work in these areas has taken the form of essays. Nazrul Islam (2005a) has published a number of essays, including a critique of qualitative methodology, an examination of the nature of the paradigm in sociology, and a clarification of Max Weber's analysis of the ideal type as a conceptual tool in sociology. He has also dealt extensively with the contemporary crisis in sociology. Other major publications on theory include such collection of essays like Karl Marx and Max Weber Perspectives on Theory and Domination by Jahangir et al (1988) and Culture Patrimonialism and Religion Revisiting Max Weber by Nazrul Islam (2004)

In addition, Nazrul Islam and S Aminul Islam (1988) have reexamined Mannheim's sociology of the intellectuals and combined it with world-system theory to explore the predicament of intellectuals in Bangladesh. In a follow-up study, Nazrul Islam (2005b) has made an attempt to mark out the changed social location of the intellectuals and their political ideologies in the post-Soviet global society Rangalal Sen has written on Marxist sociology, elite theory, and social stratification His *Political Elites in Bangladesh* (1986) was the result of his doctoral research Recent theoretical developments like postmodernism have also caught the attention of sociologists

Sociology of Development

The sociological aspects of development have been the primary focus of sociological research in Bangladesh. The original impetus for development studies came from the Academy for Rural Development at Comilla, which explored the obstacles to development and the process of the flow of modernity into rural society. It looked into the institutional structure, the role of leadership and values, which were associated with social change within the framework of modernisation paradigm

A Marxist paradigm, on the other hand, informed the works of academic sociologists like KAM Saaduddin, Bazlul Mobin Chowdhury, Anupam Sen, Rangalal Sen, Nazrul Islam, S. Aminul Islam, Mahbub Ahmed, Imdadul Haque, Zahır Sadeque, and Badrul Alam. The critical issues these sociologists have examined range from mode of production and role of the state in development to a broad range of developmental issues and development theories Anupam Sen (1982) traced the genealogy of state formation in India, and found traces in contemporary India of the 'Asiatic state' that, through its bureaucratic apparatus, constrained industrial as well as economic development Nazrul Islam (1982) was one of the earliest sociologists to undertake an empirical verification of the dependency theory with a high degree of quantitative sophistication S I Khan, S Aminul Islam and Md Imdadul Haque (1996) collaborated on a multidisciplinary study of the political culture of Bangladesh that made an effort at fleshing out an integrated theoretical framework to probe into the crises that the country was facing in its transition to democracv

Gender, Health, Urbanisation, Ageing and Environment

The study of gender relations in Bangladesh began in the late 1960s with the works of Taherunnesa Abdullah and McCarthy (see Bertocci 2002) Since then, women sociologists have played an important role in the study of gender relations and in women's movement Mahmuda Islam, HKS Arefin, Ishrat Shameem, Sadeka Halim Chodhury, Mahbuba Nasreen, Sajeda Amin and Kazi Tobarak Hossain have examined a broad range gender issues from gender violence, trafficking, women's role in forestry and disaster coping strategies of women These studies describe Bangladesh as one of the most strongly patriarchal societies in the world (Cain 1984; Amin and Lloyd 1998) The gender system of the country shows a high level of gender segregation, discrimination and entrenched violence against women The major aspects of patriarchy have been identified within family and marriage, purdah and sexual division of labour,

inequalities in household consumption and dominant patriarchal ideology with associated norms, values and rules of behaviour (Kabeer 1988) Most of these studies are in the form of individual village studies and small-scale case studies. Some large-scale sample surveys have been undertaken mostly by outsiders to explore the gender relations in the country. Ageing has also emerged as an area of research.

In recent years, with geographers taking the lead, a powerful research tradition in urban studies has emerged HKS Arefeen's (1986) study of kinship pattern in a peri-urban village and Rita Afsar's (2000) study of rural-urban migration in four major cities are major instances of research undertaken by sociologists Kamal Siddiqui's (see Siddiqui et al. 1990) work on Dhaka is a major example of a sociologically oriented study of a mega city A number of essays on poverty have featured in the Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology, which has devoted a special issue to this subject (Vol 2 No 1, 2005) Contributions were made, among others, by Mahabubuddin Ahmed, S Aminul Islam, Nazrul Islam, Monirul Islam Khan, and Shahadat Hossain

Younger sociologists have contributed to areas of health and illness, media studies, population studies, urban sociology and urban poverty. The environment, too, is receiving increasing attention from sociologists. Khondker Mokaddem Hossain and Mahbuba Nasreen have made valuable contributions in this area academically and by participating in awareness-raising campaigns. The Bangladesh Sociological Association has published collection of essays on environment (Sadeque 1992) and on health, women and environment (Nazrul Islam 1999).

Family, Kinship, Religion and Culture

The study of family began in the 1960s through the work of Tadahiko Hara (1967) The theme was again taken up by Bhuiyan (1978), in the 1970s, who examined the developmental dynamics of family in rural Bangladesh K M Ashraful Aziz and Clarence Maloney (1985) and Aziz (1979) have meticulously explored the life cycles and the process of socialisation and the nature of kinship in rural society. The theme of socialisation has also been taken up by Therse Blanchet (1994) Again, these studies are mainly anthropological in nature, but are vitally significant for a sociological analysis of family, marriage and socialisation in Bangladesh. The field of religion and culture, in spite of some important works done by Zaidi (1970), Jean Ellickson (1972, 2002) and John Thorp (1978), remains an extremely neglected field

Curriculum as Discourse

The curricular history of sociology in Bangladesh shows how the sociological discourse in the country has remained ossified and ritualistic. The early curriculum offered eight papers of 100 marks each, along with an additional 100 marks for tutorial and oral examinations for three-yearlong BA Honours degree An analysis of the curriculum shows that it remained largely unchanged over a period of quarter century, from 1959-60 to 1985-86 The curriculum in the 1950s and 1960s did not give emphasis to quantitative training, nor did it use in its teaching the burgeoning social research on Bangladesh society being carried out by different agencies (until 1978, Statistics carried only 50 marks) Although after the independence a new course entitled the 'Social Structure of Bangladesh' was introduced, it only provided students a historical narrative Of the twenty-two books recommended for the course, only three were exclusively on Bangladesh During 1992-93, the course recommended reading of more than 100 books, but it did not refer to any of the anthropological or empirical works on Bangladesh. In the 1980s. urban sociology was introduced as part of the earlier course entitled 'Rural Sociology and Community Development' A study of 'World Civilisations' was made compulsory as part of the course on anthropology A course on criminology was introduced as an optional paper

The curriculum, thus, displayed the foundational perspective born out of a philosophical-historical orientation. The introductory sociology was taught through worn-out textbooks of MacIver and Page, and Koenig, and later Karim's own textbook in Bangla published in 1973. In 1959-60, the course called 'General Sociology' recommended ten books, some of which were published in the 1920s and 1930s, and only one book in the 1950s. In 1985-86, the reading list recommended thirty-four books, only two of which were published during 1971-80. A deconstruction of Karim's textbook shows that it used only one book of the 1960s. The book presented the social life as predetermined by four factors geography, heredity, group and culture. The text used very little empirical data

Sociology did not move much beyond its beginning for over thirty years. The historical perspective offered was dominated by Marx, Weber, Wittfogel, and Karim. There was very little empirical research or its incorporation into teaching. Very little of the rich research programme in anthropology entered the classroom. Sociology, as a discourse of modernity, was indigenised and it became part of the 'local culture'. It attempted to keep its distance from functionalism or systems theory. In the course on 'Modern Sociological Theory', Parsons was rarely discussed in any depth. Within

the prevailing socio-political climate, a Marxist perspective could not be dominant in the department of sociology Liberal sociology and Marxism co-existed, giving rise to a contested epistemic regime. However, it also kept sociology within the meta-narratives of pre-functionalist period (S Aminul Islam 1999 25)

From the late 1980s, there were major changes in the curriculum when some of the younger sociologists came back from abroad During 1992-93, about twenty courses were designed from which students had to choose eight for getting BSS Honours degree At the Master's level, about fifteen courses were offered, covering theory, method and development Not only were these courses diverse, many of them used updated textbooks and materials

The Department of Sociology at Rajshahi University now offers over twenty-eight courses for its four-year BSS Honours programme with a broad range of courses including sociology of disaster, women and health, and gerontology Its Master's programme offers six courses comprising advanced sociological theories, social inequality, political sociology, sociology of development and underdevelopment, social demography and urban sociology Similarly, the Department of Sociology at Chittagong University offers twenty courses including area courses for undergraduate studies with some locally relevant and innovative courses such as social forestry, sociology of poverty and famine, sociology of mountain areas, police and society

Although the courses have proliferated, many of these courses provide knowledge which is appallingly outdated. The reading list for the introductory sociology at the University of Chittagong for 1998-99 included textbooks of MacIver and Page, Koenig, Gisbert, and works by Barnes and Sorokin, and Coser and Rosenberg. The same course at the University of Rajshahi included a section on social processes that unwittingly included the Social Darwinian views of adaptation, assimilation, accommodation, conflict, co-operation and competition. Although Shahajalal University was more advanced in the design of its courses, Gisbert featured near the top and Giddens almost at the bottom of the reading list for its introductory sociology course.

Structural Constraints and Development of Sociology

Sociological discourses in Bangladesh have largely been shaped by its peripheral socio-political structure, which has not been favourable to the discipline. A predominantly rentier class and an intellectual milieu largely shaped by an admixture of traditionalism and segmented modernisation have found sociology marginal to its needs. This apart, a number

of concrete factors have been particularly responsible for the failure in the growth of a sociological research tradition in the country

Lack of Research Fund

The sociological research in the country has faced particular difficulty because of lack of research funding. The University Grants Commission and the Social Science Research Council of the Ministry of Planning have failed to provide fund for sociological research. As a consequence, social research has been mainly funded by donor agencies, which have been rarely interested in academic or policy research.

Lack of Publication Facilities

Most of the sociological studies have been in the form of individual dissertations and few of them are published. Many of these dissertations gather dust in different libraries of the world and were not available to scholars and students in Bangladesh. A K N. Karim's (1980) dissertation was published many years after it was completed. Many were not published at all. Thus, there was very little in the form of visible research tradition in sociology. The lack of journals in sociology was also responsible for the absence of a research tradition.

Lack of Professional Associations

The lack of professional associations has been a particularly important factor beyond the absence of a viable sociological tradition in the coun—. Although there are two sociological associations in the country, both are dysfunctional. As these associations have been used in the past for status mobility by individuals, elections have often led to conflicts and frustrations. These associations have failed to generate professionalism. The overriding force of patron-clientelism underlying the social structure has overwhelmed the behaviour of sociologists, creating a vicious circle in which status seeking impedes the development of professional bodies and it, in turn, impedes the development of professionalism. The communication and socialisation among scientists that are crucial in paradigm formation in science have failed to take roots in the country.

Lack of Reflexivity

Sociologists of Bangladesh have not tried to seriously examine the lack of a viable sociological tradition. Whenever they have examined the issue, they had their canonical references to the founding fathers, and mentioned that sociology was less developed in Bangladesh compared to

the West and pathways to development lay through expanding the role of sociology for social change or for understanding social transition

In the absence of adequate external support and in the face of mounting political turmoil, sociological research and publication languished Lack of research funding, both then and now, has determined the trajectory of sociological research in Bangladesh Most of the activity has taken the form of individual dissertations that have either depended on secondary data or taken the form of participant-observation village studies

This state of sociology has led to a situation in which many sociologists tend to exercise the exit option. The brilliant among scholars leave the country. Many more opt for administrative positions within university or become involved in consultancy work. Majority of the sociologists maintain loyalty through patron-client relationships. There are only a handful of sociologists who are trying to articulate a 'voice' It is, thus, no wonder that sociology has remained a marginal and archaic discourse in Bangladesh.

Future Direction of Sociology

Local-Global Perspective

Sociology in Bangladesh, or in South Asia generally, can move forward only through greater self-reflection and charting a new course. A particular pathway for moving forward that has been much debated is the issue of developing an indigenous sociology. While there is an intrinsic appeal for an indigenous sociology, it is not easy to develop it. It is to e recalled that sociology has developed in the West over several centures, giving rise to a host of paradigms and a formidable reservoir of knowledge. Perhaps the key challenge here is to develop an embedded sociology that can make creative use of sociological concepts and theories in the contexts of local situations. There should be an increasing local-global interaction in the development of sociological theories.

This means greater contact among sociologists from different countries and regions and interaction among different sociological traditions. In the past, sociology of the South has been a captive of the Anglo-American sociology. The challenge now is to search for alternative local sociological traditions, both in the South and the North, and interact with them for developing a more robust sociology. The new information technology now makes it possible to forge local-global networks that can act as a substitute for local professional bodies. These networks will allow an expansive exchange of ideas and views all over the world.

One-way of increasing interaction among sociologists within the country and regionally is through the formation of dynamic professional association Unfortunately, the formation and the running of a professional association have proven to be a sore point in the history of the discipline in the country Although a Pakistan Sociological Association existed in the 1960s and the Bangladesh Sociology Association began functioning in the 1970s, it failed to make much headway primarily due to infighting and ideological differences Then, in 1986, a breakaway faction formed another association calling itself the Bangladesh Sociological Association. This gave rise to competition among the two and, for a while, both the associations were organising seminars and conferences, with the Bangladesh Sociological Association making a more permanent mark, as it succeeded in bringing out a few publications. The Bangladesh Sociology Association, on the other hand, opted for publishing a regular journal, which remains as an unfulfilled commitment with few issues published so far. Recently, the Department of Sociology at the University of Dhaka, with the initiative taken by its current chair, has published the first issue of another journal It is also unfortunate that both these associations have remained dormant for about ten years now

Thus, getting frustrated with the prevailing situation, a small group of Dhaka-based sociologists, with the present authors in the lead, in 2003, formed the Bangladesh Sociological Society The Society, during the short span of only two years, has achieved successes not attained previously by other such organisations. It has been particularly successful in setting up a website (www bangaldeshsociology) and floating an electronic journal (Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology) from the same site This biannual electronic journal, edited by Nazrul Islam, has already published four issues. The journal, maintaining a high standard of publication, has attained international recognition, probably the third academic journal based in Bangladesh to do so, with sociologists from India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Australia and the USA contributing to it regularly This journal has, thus, created a forum for the first time in the country in which local sociologists have to compete for publication space with the international contributors This will help in furthering the quality of sociological research in Bangladesh The Society itself is forming a vibrant community by maintaining regular contacts with other sociologists abroad through its website 'Network'.

The Department of Sociology at the University of Dhaka has also started an experimental project under the Asia-Link Programme entitled Internationally Co-ordinated Curriculum Development for Modules in Intercultural Communication in partnership with Centre for East Asian Studies at Dresden University of Technology (Germany), Euro-Asia

Centre at University of Limerick (Ireland), and School of Management and Economics at Beijing Institute of Technology (China), and with support of the European Commission. It offers two courses developed jointly by these four institutions. The teachers and students of these courses can interact with one another through net-meeting, video-conferencing and message boards. Similar offering of common courses and joint research will tremendously assist us in moving forward and making sociology relevant.

Normative Dimension of Sociology

Sociology must free itself from the ideology of positivism that was designed to patrol the borders of a bourgeois world and protect it from rages of the 'dangerous' class Sociology must aim at developing a normative core through the notions of justice and human emancipation Issues of gender, ethnicity and development, and feminist sociology in particular, have made it clear that sociologists cannot remain as detached as spacemen

Macro-Micro Integration

Sociology should aim at macro-micro integration. Research shows that even the 'pre-modern' world was deeply interlinked. The idea of the society within the confines of the nation-state may no longer be relevant. Perhaps a more meaningful boundary of sociology may be civilisational complexes or regions.

Sociology and Cultural Studies

Sociology should aim at studying culture more seriously Although it is not necessary to replace structure with culture, as Hays (2000) tends to suggest, it is important to explore how discourses establish regimes of truth, shape structures, and invest it with power – power to exclude a veritable world of others. Cultural studies have made significant intellectual contributions over the last quarter century and sociology should be able to gain a lot if it looks at cultural studies more seriously. Recently there has been significant progress in comparative sociology through the deployment of the tools of cultural sociology (Lamont 2000)

Social Processes, Trends and Consequences

Sociology should aim at studying social processes, trends and consequences more than the causes In the past, sociology has tried mainly to imitate natural sciences, especially physics, in its search for intellectual

status This has seriously impeded the growth of the discipline. It is now clear that there are no invariable and universal laws of society or great evolutionary momentum that carries it towards pre-designed goals. Social processes are created by human agents within a complex social terrain with actions that have unintended consequences and uncertain outcomes. This uncertainty does not rule out sociological theory, it only makes it more difficult to attain

Methodological Pluralism

The progress of sociology has suffered greatly due to its singular emphasis on positivism and survey methods

The opinions collected by the sociologists are opinions of subjects (actors), but these subjects are treated by as objects by the sociologists. They answer specific questions which are assumed to be relevant from the perspective of the sociologist, a member of another institution. Answering questionnaires is in itself an abnormal situation for the members of the institutions under investigation. The abnormality of the situation influences the subject-object to a greater or lesser degree. Partly as a result of the abnormality of the situation, partly as a result of the fixed character of the questions and the impossibility of a real dialogue, the answers will not completely express the opinions, ideas and the intuitions of the questioned subjects (Heller 1990, 39)

In the South, survey method has often been blindly or cavalierly used in the contexts of multiple subjects. It is often extremely difficult to isolate single subjects when surveys are done in rural society or urban slums. Thus, survey methods may not be particularly suitable for sociological research in the South. There is, thus, increasing emphasis on methodological pluralism in sociology. A more fruitful research tradition can be created through the use of multiple methods survey method, observation technique, visual methods and text analysis.

Lastly, there should be greater integration between general theory and applied sociology. This is again an area where sufficient attention has not been given. As much of the current research efforts are mounted in the area of applied sociology, these can be used more fruitfully for the development of indigenous sociology, if designed appropriately

Conclusion

This paper has made an attempt at reflexive exploration of the history of sociology in Bangladesh Sociology, as a discipline has expanded, but it has not flourished as a body of dynamic knowledge capable of under-

standing the social world and transforming it towards a good society. We have argued that we should focus on six areas for future growth of sociology both in Bangladesh and the larger region beyond it in South Asia Sociology should embrace a local-global perspective and attain a localglobal interaction through the new information technology Secondly. sociology should discard its value-neutral stance and establish itself as a discourse of emancipation with an ethical component. Thirdly, it should aim at stronger macro-micro integration Bangladesh has a long tradition of village studies In the context of globalisation, these micro contexts should be viewed more and more as part of larger structures Fourthly, sociology should have stronger engagement with cultural studies for making it relevant in an increasingly virtual world. Fifthly, it should shift its focus from causal analysis to the study of social processes, trends and consequences that have more relevance for applied and policy research Finally, sociology should move fast towards the use of mixed methods for exploring more effectively the complex terrains of social life characterised by uncertainty, unintended consequences and unpredictable outcomes

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Indian Sociology in Crisis: The Need for Regional Orientation

Hetukar Jha

The view of Orientalism 'as a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the orient' (Said 1979 3) may be true However, it may not be the whole truth The impact of the West was also quité stimulating at least in some contexts. For example, the old style of writing Puranic history which depended mostly on religious principles and afforded little space for people as the subject of history 'changed radically as the Bengali literati was schooled in the new colonial education' (Chatterjee 1993 88) Similarly, the discipline of sociology began to be established in Indian universities since the first quarter of the twentieth century in order to generate and systematise knowledge in respect of or societal questions (Mukherjee 1977 1-2) Subsequently, a number of intellectuals of the Indian subcontinent, such as Anand K Coomaraswamy, BN Seal, BK Sarkar, GS Ghurye, Radha Kamal Mukherjee and others found this western approach quite useful for understanding different aspects of Indian civilisation. According to Ramakrishna Mukherjee (1977) 28-43), they were the prolific pioneers of Indian sociology whose works, though having large dose of book views derived from Indology, helped Indian sociology gain entry into the Indian academic space Thus, sociology came to flourish in the universities of Bombay and Lucknow, which began to produce scholars, some of whom became founders of the departments of sociology in different universities and colleges in later decades

After independence, a number of universities and colleges were established in different states, and most of them also introduced the teaching of sociology By 1970s, sociology was taught from undergraduate to postgraduate levels in not less than twenty-five universities of the country (University Grants Commission [UGC] 1979) Since then, many new universities have been established and most of which have a department of sociology By 2001, sociology was taught in more than a hundred universities and there are about seventy-seven specialised research institutes in which research in sociology is conducted (UGC 2001) This may be indicative of the growing popularity of sociology in the Indian academic universe. This does not, however, mean that sociological knowledge and understanding of Indian society has also grown to

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become vigorous and rigorous simultaneously Mere expansion of the profession of sociology cannot ensure the generation of valid and reliable knowledge and understanding of society. In fact, the way this expansion has occurred and the way this discipline has been practised so far have landed Indian sociology in crisis. This paper analyses this crisis and discusses the efficacy of 'regional' studies of the issues concerning Indian society.

1

On the emergence of 'pioneers' of Indian sociology, Ramkrishna Mukherjee observes that many of the pioneers 'were Bengalis, educated in Calcutta and some of them later in Europe or the US. The next important set of pioneers was from Bombay '(1977 29) Some eminent Bengalı intellectuals such as Radha Kamal Mukherjee and D P Mukherji remained in Lucknow So, before independence, Calcutta, Lucknow and Bombay were the chief centres of sociology After independence, Delhi, being the capital city of the country, gradually emerged as a great centre of sociology. It began to attract the best and most ambitious among the teachers as well as students from all parts of the country Thus, the trend of the emergence of the *centres* of teaching of and research in sociology which began in the early twentieth century was continued and consolidated after independence Sociology has been flourishing in such elitist centres exclusively through the medium of English and, therefore, sociology of these centres has been generally oriented towards American and European models in order to keep pace with the international trends in sociology This elitist sociology is markedly different from the sociology that is taught and learnt through the medium of local/regional languages in the universities and colleges of the areas far from the said centres. This sociology, which may be termed as vernacular sociology, exists in most universities and colleges of the country Thus, there are two sociologies in India one elitist and the other, vernacular Before I examine the crisis confronting these two sociologies, let me discuss the political and historical background of their emergence

In the twentieth century, the British government 'washed their hands off any educational policy by devolving (it) to the provincial ministries following the Government of India Act of 1919' (Hagen 1981 342) The takeover of education by the provincial (state) governments after 1921 was associated with educational expansion at all levels (*Ibid* 345) However, the British officials reacted against this expansion For example, in his report of 1929, Philip Hartog wrote 'There has been an appreciable increase in the number of universities, but *their standards*

have been lowered Many of the students are unable to follow the lectures owing to their defective knowledge of English' (italics added, 1929–107 and 346) The need for maintaining and/or promoting the quality of education was highlighted to oppose its expansion (Hagen 1981–343), and, at the same time, it was asserted that the quality of education and learning depended completely on the proficiency in English The image of education/learning through English medium as one of superior quality, and, therefore, preferable, was institutionalised during the colonial period

After independence, the central government decided to establish universities and institutions of advanced research and training, besides continuing the old policy of leaving the affairs of higher education with the state governments The states varied (and still vary) from one another as regards resources, political will, pressures and demands. However, due mostly to political considerations, the state governments began establishing universities since the 1950s As a result, the number of state universities increased phenomenally. However, these universities suffer from excessive political and bureaucratic control, acute shortage of funds and other resources, and mismanagement. The institutes and universities which are funded by the central government have superior standards of campus life and research and infrastructural facilities Consequently, two tiers of universities in the country have emerged. The first tier consists of central universities in which generally English medium alone is used for teaching and research The emergence of these universities seems to have facilitated the growth of elitist sociology. The second tier consists of state universities, where local/regional languages are generally used for teaching. With the rise in the number of state universities, vernacular sociology appears to have grown as a trend to reckon with

II

The vernacular sociology seems to have grown in a direction that has been decried for long. For example, as early as 1966-67, it was reported about sociology in Rajasthan that

Usually the books prescribed are of MacIver, Davis, Parsons, Merton Looking to the standard of students it is clear that the books are beyond their understanding Consequently, students hasten to consult books written in Hindi But such books do not fulfil the requirements of the students for most of them are not conversant with subject and the students' requirements [M]ost of the Hindi writers have only tried to make capital out of the whole situation' (italics added, Doshi 1967 215)

In the 1970s, M.S A Rao noted the scarcity of good textbooks in the regional languages. 'Many concepts dealt with in the Hindi books are misleading and confusing. In the state of Punjab, scarcity of books in Punjabi is more serious than the problem of Hindi books...' (italics added, 1979: 19) K.L. Sharma reported that in Rajasthan

books in Hindi have been listed without going into the quality of translation and qualifications of the authors. In the universities and colleges in Rajasthan Hindi is increasingly becoming medium of instruction However, at Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University English continues to be the medium of instruction (1979–72)

Regarding Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, Indra Deva wrote that

The most glaring fact is that there has been a tremendous expansion in the teaching of sociology over the last two decades. Most of this expansion has been unplanned and bears no relationship to the resources that could support it at any reasonable level. Consequently, dilution of standards has been taking place at an ever accelerating rate (italics added, 1979–128)

In Bihar, Bengal, Assam, and Orissa, students were found to be generally dependent on classroom notes (dictated by teachers in their respective languages) and books written in the local languages The quality of both, classroom notes and the textbooks was considered to be quite doubtful (Jha 1979: 148)

D. Naraın observed that 'In a review of the over-all picture of the region (Maharashtra and Gujarat), it would appear that sociology is not in a good shape' (1979 229). C Rajagopalan in his report on the status of sociology in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, mentioned that

There has been a steady increase in the number of students studying sociology at various levels over a period of time. Interestingly, however, this increase in enrolment seems to be inversely related to the quality. [T]he students from the rural areas and with regional language as the medium of instruction are handicapped. [A]ded to all this is the abominably poor and inadequate physical facilities in many of the departments and colleges' (1979, 256 - 257).

By the end of the twentieth century, writing on the teaching of sociology in a regional university, Kushal Deb expressed 'a sense of unease' arising 'from one's endeavour to maintain certain academic standards, the earnest wish to engage in certain creative efforts at reading and writing, efforts at making the students feel passionately for the subject.

[T]he authority structure of regional universities works against the interests of the discipline' (1998 242) It has also been contended that

The problem of teaching sociology in the Indian languages to students who have scant proficiency in English is a challenge (which) is compounded by the nominal presence or even the total absence of quantitative components in sociology courses, which by default has given a spurious qualitative orientation to the subject. The lamentable decline in the standards of doctoral theses and MPhil dissertations is admitted everywhere' (Jayaram 1998 240-41)

It may be inferred from the aforesaid observations of scholars since the 1960s that learning of sociology has been increasingly depending on regional languages, that is, vernaculars, in state universities. Most of the textbooks prepared in vernaculars are feared to be transmitting a kind of sociological knowledge that could be simply spurious and inauthentic. Other factors such as poor quality of students, lack of motivation among them, administrative structure of the universities, local political forces, etc., directly or indirectly seem to contribute to this crisis

Ш

Elitist sociology, which is flourishing exclusively through the English medium, seems to have a visible status in international sociology. It is, perhaps, not justifiable to call this sociology 'elitist', after all, it has not remained confined to the study of merely the elite sections of our society. However, since English as the medium of communication has had an elitist image for a long time, and since this medium is exclusively used for carrying on the tradition of this sociology in the universities and institutes belonging to the first tier (that is, the elitist tier of higher education), I think it can appropriately be called 'elitist' sociology

Mukherjee (1977 149-93) lists more than seven hundred works which may be classified as belonging to the elitist sociology. The reports brought out by the Indian Council of Social Science Research from time to time throw light on the trends of research in this field. Through journals such as Contributions to Indian Sociology, Indian Social Science Review and Sociological Bulletin the tradition of research in the field has been institutionalised. The publishers such as Sage India, Oxford University Press, Manohar, MacMillan, have been regularly bringing out books and monographs in sociology. Yogendra Singh summarises the sociological research issues since pre-Independence days as follows.

The study of social change has been the central concern of Indian sociology Even when sociologists or social anthropologists did ethnographic

studies of a village, tribe or a community, an implicit focus on change existed in their frame of reference. With few exceptions, from the 1960s the study of change began to focus upon public policy, administration and the planning process in rural and urban areas. Specialisations in sociology multiplied and studies became more analytical and conscious of theory and methodology Still, the major analytical categories were those of caste. class, tribe and community Policy-oriented rural and urban surveys were undertaken, the interest being on planned transformation of society Studies of social movements were added on to these interests from the 1970s These studies also introduced diverse theoretical and methodological A debate on the indigenisation of orientations in the studies of change categories persisted The discussions ranged from a quest for 'a sociology for India' to explorations in 'ethno-sociology' Noticeable innovation can be seen in the study of new social movements dalit movements, gender and eco-feminist movements '(1996 8-9)

This suggests that sociological studies in India (pursued through the medium of English) have attained impressive intellectual sophistication. However, such studies are said to have been directly or indirectly guided by western models and perspectives to a great extent.

In the late 1960's Ram Ahuja bemoaned that 'It is indeed regrettable that even though sociology is now being taught in our country for the last forty to forty-five years, yet it continues to be on the American pattern' (1967, 118-19) Later, André Béteille wrote that 'Indian sociology has not developed a tradition of its own [T]he kinds of concerns which Indian sociologists brought to their study were largely a reflection of the concerns of sociologists and social anthropologists from the more advanced western countries' (1974, 7)

More recently, it has been asserted that higher education in India has remarkably remained the preserve of national and regional elites (Deshpande 2003 265) The elite monopolisation of different disciplines, including sociology, appears to be behind the fear that

from the perspective of the (West-dominated) global academic market, 'India' may continue to be a saleable and sought-after research site, but Indian researchers based in India (that is, those without strong institutional links to the West) are probably going to lose out to other, better-placed categories of researchers' (*Ibid* 269)

K N Sharma opines that 'we academicians have been victims of academic globalisation since long. It is extremely difficult to shed western perspectives' (2000 94) Thus, the domination of European and American models and perspectives is resented, since it is feared that Indian sociology is alienating from Indian reality For Deshpande, the

future of sociology in India depends upon how well does sociology 'break out of its English straitjacket and create an intellectually viable world for itself in at least some Indian languages' (2003. 270) Besides, there are charges that

. we [Indian sociologists] have never achieved any unanimity in our characterisation of reality. In many a case, politicians and ideologies generate new concepts and we go on hashing and rehashing them. [O]ur burgeoning baggage of concepts and theories has little to offer as acceptable and workable solutions to myriad problems' (K.N. Sharma 2000 94).

The aforesaid comments and views suggest that (elitist) sociology has not been seriously pursued so far from the point of view of the ethos and needs of Indian society, culture and civilisation and, therefore, its adequacy appears to be doubtful

Since sociology contributes to the understanding and explanation of social phenomena that may be useful for engineering social change, it is necessary that it should grow as a discipline having both authenticity and adequacy without losing its link with the mainstream of international sociological tradition. For this, it has to be Indianised or indigenised But how to do this? How can these two sociologies be made one authentic and adequate Indian sociology? For considering any strategy for doing this, it is necessary to discuss some views regarding Indian society in the contemporary era

Until about the 1970s, India's diversity was taken to be a symptom of its weakness Nationalist Indians always tried to emphasise the unity of India and ignore her diversity MN Srinivas (1992 4-5) describes how in the 1940s elites used to react to even inquiries about the existence of diversity in Indian society However, since the beginning of the mid-1980s, 'We have...moved into a situation when people want to record the diversities [T]his is a major cultural shift, a cognitive shift. He contends that 'ours is a country which is very rich in diversity and there is often talk of tolerance of diversity. [T]this is not enough. We should appreciate that our glory lies in our diversity' (Ibid 5 and 4) Perhaps, because of this 'cognitive shift', 'The policy resolution on the Anthropological Survey of India [ASI] was revised in 1985 and committed this organisation to the survey of the human surface of India' (K.S Singh 1992 13). The ASI survey has brought to light altogether ninety-one eco-cultural zones in the country, and each state has not less than three cultural zones (Ibid. 34)

According to Joseph Schwartzberg, well known for his historical atlas of India, regions could be of three types 'denoted', 'instituted', and 'naively given' By 'denoted' region,

[is] meant regions which are distinguished and delimited with a particular purpose in view (of a linguist, or a historian, or an anthropologist) unrelated to the existing units for administrative purposes. The 'instituted' region arises out of administrative functions, in order to facilitate the performance of and to define the spatial limits of such functions. Finally, the 'naively given' region is recognised as a meaningful territorial unit by the people who live there or by other people to whom it is of some concern. '(quoted in Bhattacharya 2002. 53)

The 'naively given' region is a product of history, a living region that is recognised by the people living in it as their own. Their identity, history, and culture all are recognised as those of their region. The ninety-one eco-cultural zones identified by the ASI are the naively given regions, each of which has distinct socioeconomic and cultural features. Societies of different cultural regions seem to be linguistically, culturally and structurally different. In some regions, peasant social formations are still dominant, in others, capitalists or even late capitalist trends may be prominent. In one corner of the country semi-feudal mode of agricultural production was found to be prevailing, while in another region it was considered to be pre-capitalist or feudal and, at the same time, some regions were observed to have manifestations of the elements of capitalist mode of production (see Sengupta 1977, Thorner 1982)

The villages of some cultural regions (such as the Bhojpuri belt and the Magahi area) are found to be mostly horizontally divided, having little of hierarchy in interpersonal interactions and prone to violence. In the cultural region of north Bihar (the Mithila area), villages are mostly vertically divided, having too much of hierarchy and very little of violence (Jha et al. 1985). Similarly, examples of differences in the socio-cultural and economic features of different eco-cultural or 'naively given' regions can be noted. What appears to be important here is that regions generally vary in respect of socioeconomic and cultural life.

India is a subcontinent constituted by ninety-one 'naively given' regions Indian society, under the circumstances, is virtually a super-organic complex of regional societies. Hence, the 'naively given' region is the appropriate unit of sociological studies, and regional sociologies may be developed in order to build an adequate and authentic Indian sociology. Regional issues must be studied not only in terms of their present manifestations also but in terms of how those issues have emerged historically. Such historical investigations, however, must

depend more on the field-view of history, than on the book-view of history, as the latter does not generally present an account of life actually lived in history ²

Furthermore, the issues of a region must be studied not only in terms of their relevance to that region, but also to those of other regions and the country at large A regional issue may become important at the national level as well For example, peasants' protests against the indigo planters in north Bihar in the first quarter of the twentieth century led to the involvement of masses in the independence movement. Similarly, there may be national issues which could be studied in different regions for understanding region-wise variations in their intensity, emergence and strength Through regional sociologies, more rigorous, detailed and intensive coverage of such issues including the views of the poor and disadvantaged in English as well as regional languages is quite feasible Regional records such as village papers, records of land transaction. genealogies, literary works and historical narratives available in regional languages, folktales, folksongs, legends associated with shrines and other places and oral accounts can be used for regional sociological study of various issues

Before considering the substantive problem areas for sociological research, a basic issue has to be discussed. Should we consider Indian sociology to be genuine if it includes simply studies of Indian society from above, that is, from the perspectives of the sociology of the western countries? Or, should we accord primacy to the demands, needs and problems of our own society and try to understand what and why these are by simply using appropriate sociological concepts, principles, etc? Should the baggage of sociological instruments (including methods, concepts, definitions, theoretical generalisations, etc.) be considered master or just an aid? I believe that India's needs and problems deserve to be considered more important in this context and the problem areas of sociological research in the country must be those crucial to the wellbeing, survival and future of our society Following this approach, it becomes imperative that we should recognise the relevance of even the ignored regions and the ignored sections of a region or regions sociological investigation This may enable Indian sociology to grow through the growth of regional sociologies, and can equip sociologists with the knowledge of peoples and cultures that could be useful to the expanding market and media Sociology can thus become market-relevant, which, according to Yogendra Singh (1996) 12), appears to be necessary for its survival It may be recalled that Radha Kamal Mukheriee and Patrick Geddes had earlier fervently pleaded for regional sociology However, it remained ignored after independence until about the 1970s when it was

'posited as the way to bridge the gap between planning at the level of the nation-state and at the individual village level' (Mukherjee 1977 126). This view of the limited function of regional sociology could hardly contribute to the emergence of regional sociologies of the ground realities of different eco-cultural zones. What is needed is region-wise sociological studies of issues confronting the future of democracy as well as the future of development. A few such issues are discussed below

IV

'Of all the public debates in India today the most significant and also the most contentious,' according to TN Madan 'is the debate about secularism including religious nationalism and fundamentalism' (1997 266) Essentially, communalism among different religious communities appears to be a serious problem and, it deserves to be accorded priority for sociological research. We need to study 'the manner in which interrelatedness of culture, society and politics has unfolded' (Ibid), and given rise to the forces of communalism. There is abundance of Indological literature on dharma, sects, and the philosophies of Hindus, Muslims and Jains But, we know little about how dharma has been actually lived, how different sects of the same religion have lived together, how the followers of Islam have lived with those of Hinduism, Jainism or Christianity, why and how did some sects become popular in some socioeconomic sections of people and not in others, and how and why some sects practically ceased to exist in course of time? These questions must be addressed by sociological studies in each cultural region, and such studies must consider, historical narratives, particularly the field views of different periods. Besides written records and documents, folk songs, legends, oral accounts, and folk tales of all the communities of the region may be used for gaining such field views

'Hinduism' arose, according to David Lorenzen, following the advent of Islamic politico-religious forces in the thirteenth century, as a religious identity shared by the followers of 'variegated beliefs and practices cutting across the boundaries of sect, caste, chosen deity or theological creed' (1999–655) Pandit Hajari Prasad Dwiwedi also contends that Hinduism as a religious identity emerged following the rise of Islamic power having a social base much broader than that of any of its constituent religions and sectarian traditions (cited in Namvar Singh 1989–76) With such a broad base, it also acquired a very liberal and humanitarian approach by the efforts of Vidyapati, Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya and others in the medieval era However, in the colonial period, a very narrow view of Hinduism was formulated, projected and

institutionalised by the British authorities ³ Now, questions arise as to which socio-cultural and political forces worked for the emergence of Hinduism in the medieval era? In which regions this religious identity was born and developed, and how it was widely accepted by people? What were its consequences in different regions for its followers and also for others in later centuries? Why and how it was made narrow? Which socio-political factors created this situation? What were its consequences for the wider society?

Similarly, questions can be raised in respect of Islam, Christianity, and their various sects as well. The variations in relationships between religious communities in each region in different periods of history deserve to be explored for understanding the causes of and the cure for communalism. India is perhaps one of the few countries in the world where a very large number of religions and religious sects have been flourishing for a long time. However, sadly there is hardly any research institution which is exclusively concerned with the study of various religions, sects and the relationships among their followers from the perspectives of social sciences and history. Sociology of religion deserves to be developed seriously

Related to the phenomenon of communalism is that of casteism Much has been written on caste, but casteism has not yet been taken up for sociological study. It is not necessary to describe here the cases of caste conflict and terrorism occurring in the various parts (such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) of the country. Caste has been in existence in India since the ancient period, but casteism is a recent development in her history Which socioeconomic and political forces worked for its appearance and growth? How has it been practised by different castes since the last quarter of the nineteenth century? In the second half of the nineteenth century, HH Risley found about 700 castes and communities existing in Bihar About a century later, only a little more than 250 of these castes were found to be in existence. Is this fusion related to casteism? Has this fusion of subcastes occurred in other areas as well? Why and how caste was made most important of all institutions in the nineteenth century? What was the status of caste in relation to other institutions before colonial rule? Is the policy of job reservation for a large number of caste groups now a continuation of colonial view of caste? What is the relationship of casteism and political power in different regions? What are the consequences of the practice of casteism in different regions for different caste groups and also for socioeconomic development at the regional level? One hears quite frequently voices condemning Manuvada and Manuvadis Is it justified in the light of the history of the course of existence of Manuvada? Or, is such a voice raised simply for securing the political support of the large mass of those getting benefit of the reservation policy? Or, does it reflect an ideological strategy of those (speaking against the so-called *Manuvada*) asserting the legitimacy of their claim of having high socioeconomic and political status (by countering the ideological source of the superior status of upper *Varnas*)? There have been a number of other religious traditions and some of which have not been less important than what is generally called *Manuvada* For example, *Tantra* or various *Tantric* cults have most probably remained dominant among the non-upper-caste groups (Jha 2002) Changes in the patterns of relationships between different traditions in different regions in different periods of time deserve to be explored for understanding inter-religious and inter-community interactions of both co-operation and conflict

The variations in the relationships between caste and landownership and socio-political power should be studied in each region in different periods of history. One caste is found to have declined in status and power in the course of few centuries, while another caste is seen rising in status during the same period. In the second half of the nineteenth century, quite a number of the ruins of medieval forts were identified as those of Dusadhs constituting a scheduled caste today (Jha 2001 135-38) Among the Siddhas of late ancient and early medieval period there were many persons from the caste groups known today as dalits or scheduled castes (Dwivedi 1998 41-51) It is, therefore, necessary that the history of the course of existence of each caste should be studied in each region in terms of the rise and fall of its status in relation to that of other castes The variations in inter-caste relationships in different periods and in different regions should be studied for understanding the truth of exploitative, and divisive as well as integrative aspects of the caste system

Along with caste or hierarchical inequality, Béteille (2002 6 and 18) contends that competitive inequality has also become quite noticeable. As a result, the middle class in India has not only become very large in size (consisting of persons estimated to be not less than 100 million and not more than 250 million) but very heterogeneous. Many castes of intermediate- and lower-caste clusters have of late entered the fold of middle class. But, in this context, Bèteille says, 'there is little systematic empirical material. The Indian middle class has not so far received the serious scholarly attention that it deserves from sociologists' (*Ibid* 7)

The universe of villages in different regions also requires urgent attention of sociologists. Village has been a subject of study from the points of view of social sciences and history since the colonial period (Jha 1991 17-20). However, the changing patterns of relationship

between rural and urban areas and their consequences for village structure have not received much attention of sociologists. The little that we know in this context indicates that village, as a community, as a sociological reality, is virtually lost due to the pressure of external authority and modern institutions. The zamındarı system established in 1793 created conditions for the emergence of classes in the village. The decline of rural schools, crafts and industries forced by the British authorities impoverished the village a great deal. The British legal system (based in urban areas) has not only been draining the rural wealth out of villages but has contributed to perpetuation as well as proliferation of conflict in the rural areas Village today hardly exists as more than a territorial identity (see Jha 2003) The degree of decline, however, may differ from region to region, and therefore, region-wise situation should be brought to light Village is the only institution in rural areas which provides secular space for the coexistence of different castes and communities Decline of the force of village reality seems to have made space for the rise of casteism and communalism. For any kind of development of rural areas, village has to be strengthened, consolidated and organised Who will do this? The NGOs which once emerged with commitment to promote development with social justice are now mostly dependent on external funding agencies, and their accountability, it is feared, lies with the funding agencies, not with rural communities (Kamat 2003 89-90) Besides, due to the impact of neo-liberalism (representing globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation), NGOs are feared to be shifting their focus from community/collectivity to individuals (*Ibid* 91) So, there is little hope that NGOs would help in reorganising the village communities. However, villages have to be organised It is an important obligation of Indian sociologists to focus their attention on village life and prepare appropriate strategies for restoring the force of community to the village

A very important sector of our society is its political system. How does political class manage the state affairs? What kinds of socio-economic and other backgrounds matter in the making of political leaders today party-wise and state-wise? What are the ideological and other reasons of the proliferation of political parties? To what extent do political parties have legitimacy? These are some of the issues which deserve to be studied seriously. Immanuel Wallerstein (1974–143) thinks that governments are seldom supported, most of the time they are just endured. Furthermore, the issue of legitimacy, according to him, is concerned less with masses than with the cadres, since 'it depends primarily on the greater or lesser ability of the small number of people managing the state machinery to convince larger administrative and

regional groups the soundness of their policies' (Merquior 1979 29) In most of the states in India, large numbers of cadres are found defecting often from one party to another The question of convincing anyone the soundness of any political policy does not arise under the circumstances Thus, the political class does not seem to be equipped with the capacity to receive consent of the public, at least in most of the states of the country. This class appears to be simply interested to remain in power and use force to dominate the people and strengthen its position However, domination is gradually becoming very difficult. The administrative and executive machinery that works as an instrument for domination seems to be falling increasingly in the grip of the forces of casteism and communalism. So, the use of force tends to be quite risky and ineffective This is a situation of acute political crisis when the political elite neither have the consent of the people nor are they in a position to use instruments of domination According to Antonio Gramsci, this is the situation that generally generates corruption in political sphere (Hoare and Smith 1978 80) Sociologists must identify the different dimensions of this crisis in each state and explore the socio-economic and cultural factors responsible for the emergence of such a situation

There may be many more issues which can be considered important for sociological investigation Regional approach can help in identifying such issues at the grass-roots level Sociologists can, thus, connect themselves to the ground reality and only, then, an adequate and authentic Indian sociology in different regional languages as well as in English can, hopefully, be developed

Notes

- 1 The term 'superorganic' has been used here in the sense A L. Kroeber used it for describing culture 'as a "coral reef" of artefacts, customs and ideas, the product of endless secretions deposited by organic, individual polyps, and yet outliving them all, besides giving each of them an indispensable base for their own survival' (Merquior 1979 46)
- 2 For example, Max Weber (1958 29-30) on the basis of Indological works contended in clear terms that the sacerdotal Brahmans have held supreme authority (over all political, economic and other domains) in Indian society However, Nicholas Bi Dirks (1993 4), in his study of how the institution of kingship in a South Indian region actually flourished before colonial rule, found the political domain working quite independently without being encompassed by the religious domain. The field view of early medieval Bihar also contradicts the book view based on Indological works (see R S. Sharma 1974 362).
- 3 Hinduism came to be defined as Brahmanism for the first time, and caste began to be considered 'fundamental to Hinduism (as Hinduism was to it)' (Dirks 2002 41)

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Locating the Humanities and the Social Sciences in Institutes of Technology

Ravinder Kaur

Introduction

Sociology is taught outside the university system in several other educational institutions such as institutes of technology and in programmes of business administration Many of us find employment in such institutions, teaching sociology to students whose main degree is not in this subject This peculiar positioning of sociology raises questions not only of how and what to teach, but also about the place and space of what I will call the Humanities and Social Science (HSS) disciplines in such institutions It promotes certain reflexivity about these disciplines and raises the issue of what is the important knowledge that social sciences like sociology can convey and why it is necessary. In an institute of technology or in a business studies programme, the validity of sociological knowledge is not self-evident, it has to be proven This, of course, is a battle that has a long history, dating back to the beginnings of modernity and the positivist regime. In the current context, one also needs to explore the political economy which differentially values the contributions of various forms of disciplinary knowledge. The manner in which institutional contexts and the wider political economy influence the shape and growth of disciplines is revealed by examining the structural maps of the university and the institution.

Instead of beginning from an axiomatic acceptance and justification of the presence and role of HSS in technological institutes, one should begin by asking the question 'Why have HSS in institutes of technology at all?' The institute is a place for learning engineering sciences and skills, so why bother the students with English literature, economics, sociology, philosophy, psychology and sundry other disciplines which appear to add no value to their training? Studying these other disciplines would appear to be a waste of time.

Yet, technology institutions across the world have felt the need to include a HSS component in their curriculum. What purpose or 'felt need' are such 'soft disciplines' expected to serve or fulfil? Here are samplers from two elite engineering institutions in the United States of America, Purdue University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

Humanities and Social Sciences courses encompass the breadth of human experience and culture, both past and present, including individual behaviour, social and political structures, aesthetic values, modes and dynamics of communication, philosophical and ethical thought, and cognitive processes Such courses are an integral part of all engineering curricula which complements technical and professional content by enabling engineering students to appreciate the world in which they live and work, and to contribute as both educated members of society and aware, ethical professionals

Humanities and social sciences courses also provide a framework for rational inquiry, critical evaluation, judgement and decisions when dealing with issues that are non-quantifiable, ambiguous, or controversial Of equal importance, they offer opportunities for engineering students to develop interests and insights that guide, enrich and expand their perceptions of the world they live in' (Rationale for the General Education Program, Purdue University)

The Lewis Committee (Committee on Educational Survey), set up in 1947, in its report to the faculty of the MIT, recommended that MIT should emphasise four general areas of education and research and that each area should be organised as a separate school with its own dean The four areas were engineering, science, architecture and planning, and humanities and social sciences

Allied to the work of the main committee were two additional groups of which one was the Committee on General Education, which examined how to provide undergraduates with broad and more effective 'cultural training' and recommended a general strengthening of the curriculum and required subjects in the humanities and social sciences MIT's President during much of the early post-World War II period was James Killian, himself a humanist He recognised the importance of an integrated programme in the humanities and social sciences and felt that this would mark MIT as a leader in engineering education. As it transpired, MIT is known both for its engineers and for its social scientists

Stanford University's programme in 'Values, Technology, and Science' with courses taught by three faculty members, one from engineering, one from social sciences, and one from humanities emerged as a result of the soul searching after the Vietnam War. The need to question the powerful doctrine of the ethical neutrality of science and technology and to locate science and technology in society created the space for humanities and social science disciplines in many technical institutes. However, it was not a one-way street. While MIT tried to humanise the scientist, across the river, Harvard tried to 'scienticise' the humanist! This led to an undergraduate curriculum in the US where the student has almost a free choice of electives spanning the arts and the sciences

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Thus, it is clear that the major engineering institutes realised the need for a liberal education for the young student and felt that science and technology education should be supplemented by HSS disciplines which could provide the skills for societal understanding, cultural training and the understanding of ambiguity and moral issues. The fact that thinking on such issues was driven also by ethical crises created by wars and conflicts, points to some self-introspection on questions of the power and assumed value neutrality of science and technology. In recent times, failures of technologies such as large dams, on the one hand, and ethical questions raised by the emergence of genetic engineering, on the other, have also made certain practitioners look towards the HSS disciplines for guidance

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) based themselves on the MIT model, keeping in special view the development needs of India as a new nation. The 1946 Saikar Committee Report argued that then existing degree colleges did not integrate mathematics, science and humanities with the specialised professional subjects. This was seen as a lacuna to be filled. Henceforth, in the new IITs there was to be a strong emphasis on the integration of basic sciences and humanities in engineering education. It was further argued that strong departments of sciences and humanities should be established with a status comparable to engineering departments as opposed to a service role, as prevalent in the traditional engineering departments.

In the next section, I show that in India the shape of HSS departments in institutes of technology is determined by their choice of two alternative models. The first is the 'service model', and the second is a model in which HSS courses are seen on par with engineering courses. In the second model, to ensure that HSS courses are given the same kind of status and respect as engineering courses, a very important requirement (adhered to in the IITs) is that the credit value of HSS courses is the same as that of engineering courses (of course, the number of such courses is fewer by definition).

The Service Model of HSS

The service model of HSS presumes a quality of 'usefulness' for these disciplines. They are chosen on the basis of their perceived or demonstrated usefulness. This is illustrated by analysing how the various disciplines have been transmuted and appropriated by technology institutions. Thus, in a society with variable English-language skills, and a perceived linkage between good English-language skills and professional success, English-language teaching takes on an important role. Success in the

wider world is tied up with being able to speak 'good' English and, more importantly, with the ability to 'communicate well' This has created an unquestioning acceptance of courses in 'communication skills' and of their technological counterpart, 'the language lab', in all technology institutes A very legitimate financial investment in an HSS department is in the revamping and modernising of language labs. The more technologically sophisticated the lab, the better the reputation of the programme (here, too, it appears that technology wins the day) A globalising and highly competitive world demands marketable products, in this case, the students The language lab is expected to provide the 'finishing school' effect to the immature, gawky engineering graduate. This polished product, additionally groomed by 'training and placement centres' of such institutes, is then floated to be picked up by the multinational companies scouting the elite and not-so-elite engineering school campuses. The 'language lab', with its technological appeal and 'doing' mentality, is also something that is comprehensible to the engineer. In a lesser vein, so is the psychology lab ² That language and psychology labs should also be the locus of research for their respective disciplines is a purpose that often remains on the margins or non-existent in such labs in institutes of technology

Of the social sciences, economics is seen to be the more useful one, acquainting students with the world of commerce and industry. Economics, due to its use of statistical and mathematical techniques also finds easier acceptance as it is considered to be 'harder', while the other disciplines are considered to be 'soft'. Despite being a social science and not as 'hard' as the pure or applied sciences, economics arouses certain envy in the engineer which is evinced in the following statement by two engineers.

For various reasons, positions of prestige in India have been cornered by economists and to a lesser extent by scientists, engineers have a next to no say in affairs of state. For instance, in the past two or three decades, no engineer has been a member of the Planning Commission – although engineers are responsible for 80 percent of plan expenditure. In industry too, climb to the top is through sales, financing and marketing and not through the engineering ladder' (Nigam and Indiresan 1993, 356).

They bemoan the fact that even in the ministries, young IAS officers lord it over more-'qualified' engineers. Few engineers make it above the middle level management. Hence, economics, fortified by its public image as an important discipline for making policy and running governments, is reluctantly given respect in otherwise marginal HSS departments

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Additionally, the close tie between engineering and industry makes it necessary to understand the world through the powerful categories of economics. Since the rural world and its technological needs is often far removed from the environs of elite engineering institutions (literally 'ivory towers'), concerns of the rural economy or rural population are accommodated in second-rate Departments of Rural Development and Technology. The kind of research expected to be done here — 'appropriate technology' (implying low-level) — does not hold much attraction for the young engineer who wishes to make his mark by working at cutting-edge industrial technologies.

In regional engineering colleges (RECs), even economics does not fare so well Just as English is reduced to language- and communications-training, economics is often reduced to commerce, with the token course in accounting Knowledge of the assumptions and underlying basis of economics as a discipline is, hence, unavailable to the student Accounting is seen as the 'useful' part of economics. The discipline is, thus, bifurcated into its useful and non-useful aspects and reduced to what is perceived to contribute directly to skill development.

Management studies, seen as the key to managing 'human resources' and seen as a discipline which gives the engineer an edge over other engineers and non-technology professionals, has been in the ascendant across the globe ³ Managerial positions in industry or in international consulting firms are some of the highest paid jobs available in the current economy. The 'deadly' combination of a BTech and a management degree propels the young engineer into lucrative management positions with emoluments which his professors can only dream of

Following the logic of the market, most engineering institutes have introduced full-fledged management courses leading to degrees in management. Those that do not have independent departments of management studies offer several courses in management studies. In many institutes, the teaching of psychology too has been harnessed to management concerns, focusing on human resource development issues and on participative management. Psychology as an independent discipline then tends to die a natural death. In the service model of HSS, management being an omnibus, 'practical' discipline tends to be parasitical on the talents of other disciplines — on economics, sociology, psychology, and even philosophy (as in 'business ethics'). Through being predatory on other disciplines, it tends to build itself up as a discipline, which has 'deliverables', or concrete output, unlike the other HSS disciplines that appear to be diffuse in what they achieve

Following strictly the logic of the service model of HSS leads to a possible future scenario of HSS departments being reduced to specialised

'cells' dealing with English language and communication skills and a department of management studies. The love affair with management studies may last as long as the market is convinced that it has something to deliver, already Wall Street is showing preference for PhDs in the pure sciences. The service model of the HSS then has a hard time accommodating economics, philosophy, psychology, sociology and English on their own merits. Where such disciplines survive, they tend to get internally split into their useful and non-useful components, thus destroying the unity that makes them the source of critical questioning anti-thought.

Rise of the 'Value Centre': An Alternative Power Centre?

Analysing trends in the development of HSS and related disciplines (management, value studies, etc.), it is clear that HSS departments face challenges from within and without Privatisation of education and the demand to respond to the market economy promotes a narrow understanding of 'use' and 'usefulness' of disciplines which threatens a further marginalisation of the original goals of the HSS disciplines. A unarticulated reason is the subversive possibilities inherent in the HSS disciplines and their teaching. The account given below explores this as a hidden subtext to the marginalisation or transmutation of HSS in technology institutions.

A recent development which seeks to appropriate further the role of the HSS departments is the setting up of centres for teaching values (National Resource Centre for Value Education in Engineering [NRCVEE] in IIT-Delhi) in many technical institutions. These have been set up to redress the perceived lack of values in engineering graduates and were generously funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, under the Bharatiya Janata Party dispensation. The IIT-Delhi's NRCVEE is expected to be the role model for other such centres in premier technology and management institutes. That the impetus for such a centre has come partially from the market, apart from its ideological underpinning, is clear from the question of a former Director of IIT-Delhi 'Industry is asking why graduates of IITs are not loyal to companies—why do they job-hop so much?' He argued that the role of the HSS department should be to instil the 'right values' in students so that they would stop job-hopping

The emphasis on values creeps in through the concerns of senior engineering faculty who feel that the young engineering student of today is too materialistic and does not care enough about family, society and nation Therefore, he/she needs to be 'taught values' Given this, such

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centres too are seen as fulfilling a 'practical need' The value centre, where it emerges, thus arrogates to itself the task of 'teaching values' This has the potential of further marginalising the HSS department HSS disciplines teach values through discussion and analysis, through the pedagogy of understanding moral difference, ambivalence and uncertainty They examine society and its utopias, not by reinforcing prejudice but by opening up the complexity, ambiguity and unarticulated nature of values The danger inherent in a 'value centre' situated outside e HSS department is both intellectual and organisational. The intellectual danger is that of assuming a consensus on the 'correct' interpretation of what ails society, and on the 'correct' values and also the 'correct' way of teaching these The structural threat consists in undermining the role of HSS departments by depleting them of faculty or by rerouting them to the value centres Subversion of such politically motivated ideological interventions is, however, possible as seen in the case to IIT-Bombay Here, the Value Centre Programme, entrusted to the HSS faculty, was reinterpreted as an arts and aesthetics programme, hosting writers and artists and facilitating their interaction with students and faculty

The Core Model

To give IITs their due, from there inception they have followed a non-service model of HSS. What are the implications of this model for the structure of the departments and for curriculum in these disciplines? The non-service model eschews goals of demonstrating 'practical usefulness'. It sees the training of a student as an integrated effort. Underlying such a philosophy is a distinction between imparting training and imparting education in the classical sense. There is a firm belief that HSS knowledge should be an essential component of the learning of engineering disciplines. Engineering schools realise the 'value' of such an education in socialising the student

The non-service or core model, thus, leads to curriculum that is not strictly 'need'- or 'usefulness'-driven as perceived by the market All HSS disciplines find a space in it on their merits, as reflections on society and the human condition and as attempts to understand both Sociology, psychology, economics, philosophy and English literature and linguistics, through their respective disciplinary grounding, teach students to develop a framework for rational enquiry, critical evaluation, judgement and decisions when dealing with a range of issues many of which are not quantifiable, possibly ambiguous or even controversial HSS disciplines allow the student to hold a mirror to society and to oneself

The IITs have adopted the non-service model from their inception with full-fledged HSS departments. That these departments have their own PhD programmes gives them parity with other engineering and science departments and encouragement to be centres of excellence in their own disciplines. The general level of faculty-competence is high with many IIT HSS faculty producing research of international standards.

In the structuring of the departments, IITs have followed two models one with a combination of core courses and electives, and the other with only electives. The freedom to float new courses and to interpret syllability combined with the system of internal evaluation allows faculty the freedom to innovate and upgrade what they teach. This is where the IITs score over the universities in general. Faculty members have the freedom to teach in areas of their particular research interests. As a result of this system, IIT-Delhi, for instance, has floated several innovative courses—'Mind, Machines and Language', 'Art and Technology', 'Rethinking the Indian Tradition', 'Environment, Development and Society', to name but a few. These courses inculcate moral sensitivity in the student through rigorous and free yet intellectually guided debate.

The interdisciplinary nature of these departments can be a further source of strength and fecundity Fruitful research and teaching collaboration is possible, yet often this is not sufficiently exploited A necessary condition for optimum functioning is a critical mass of faculty members in each sub-discipline, not all IITs are able to attain this

The Status of HSS vis-à-vis Science and Engineering

We need ask to what extent this original impulse of the core model to integrate HSS training in overall curricula and give it an equal importance has been sustained If not, what have been some of the reasons for the decline or the marginalisation of HSS Departments in these elite institutions?

The practical step of creating independent, full-fledged departments on the part of premier engineering institutions in a non-service model appears to contend that it is short-sighted to think that knowledge while specialised is divisible into useful/useless. Yet, society colludes in creating a hierarchical ranking between the knowledge provided by engineering and science disciplines and that provided by HSS disciplines. Not only is there a hierarchy, but also there appears to be a wide chasm that was commented upon C.P. Snow in his book on *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* in 1959. Nearly half a century

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later we are led to ask whether the gap is wider or has it been narrowed in any perceptible way?

In the history of disciplines, conjuncture which allows the possibility of the quarrel between natural and social sciences for disciplinary supremacy is relatively recent, dating to the late Renaissance period. The original controversy was over the place of painting, sculpture and architecture which were taught in the department of armament studies. The engineering sciences were originally known as the arts, as engineering was seen as being closer to the craft tradition. Pointing to the modern day disjunction, Immanuel Wallerstein (1996) argues that for 200 years we have been living in a structure of the organisation of knowledge in which 'philosophy' and 'science' have been considered distinctive, indeed virtually antagonistic, forms of knowledge. It is salutary to remember that it was not always so. The division, he emphasises, between the so-called two cultures, is a rather recent social construction—it was virtually unknown anywhere in the world before the mid-eighteenth century.

Despite the positivist movement in the social sciences that attempted to bring social sciences closer to the natural sciences, the former have remained methodologically and substantively closer to a humanist and interpretative model Within technology institutes, there is a clear hierarchy in terms of hard and soft disciplines How does this hierarchisation affect the standing and treatment of HSS departments? Structurally, in engineering institutes, HSS departments, by definition, occupy a marginal and not a core position. The relative faculty size is small, and they do not have a direct concern with many affairs of the institute (for example entrance examination, science and engineering R&D activity. etc) The students are there to acquire a degree in engineering and not in the HSS disciplines Many HSS faculty members themselves imbibe this marginality and prefer to carry on with their teaching unconcerned with other affairs of the institute Each faculty member has to take a conscious decision as to how to relate to the institute. In institutes where administrative duties outside the department are not mandatory an individual faculty member can restrict her/his interaction to her/his own department and to students, remaining isolated from the concerns of the rest of the institute

There is another factor that makes a difference in the structuring of this relationship. In institutes like IIT-Delhi, HSS faculty has a large disciplinary reservoir outside the institute with whom they can interact and network. Therefore, for many IIT-Delhi faculty members, their employment in the Institute simply serves as an 'address'. In institutes located in smaller towns (such as Kanpur), the faculty members have to look inwards for intellectual sustenance and collaboration. This can lead

to greater interaction with non-HSS faculty members, even if it is on an individual basis, often resulting in fruitful intellectual collaboration and a greater acceptance and integration of their concerns

HSS faculty members may themselves internalise their lower status and accept their own disciplines as being 'soft' and unimportant for the student. As a result, they tend to be academically less demanding of their students, who can easily pull the wool over their eyes by claiming to be heavily burdened with workload in engineering courses. Students, too, internalise the characterisation of HSS courses as 'soft', 'light' and 'easy', not requiring much study or preparation time. Many feel they can skip classes in these courses. They pick elective courses depending on how easy it is to score in a course. The choice is dependent upon which course will yield good grades with only light work and a professor who is not fussy about attendance!

Of course, there is the other side of the picture too, where students feel that HSS courses are the only ones they 'enjoy', with good teachers and interesting subjects being tackled. The non-hierarchical behaviour of many faculty members towards students — where the teacher tries to familiarise herself/himself with students as individuals with names and personalities and not merely as 'entry' numbers, the latter being the case in many of their engineering courses — and the possibility of classes being interactive and discussion-based make the HSS disciplines attractive to the students. Many students are genuinely convinced of the 'usefulness' of what is taught in these classes to their overall development. Some find in these courses a way of developing personal interests and inclinations — in art, literature and in social issues

For the faculty, the marginal status of HSS can lead to a feeling of perceived and actual powerlessness, especially, if the HSS departments are sidelined in matters of slotting of classes, positions on institute bodies, with little attention being paid to faculty needs and requirements Very often, rules of recruitment applicable to science/engineering disciplines do not work well for recruiting and retaining appropriate HSS faculty Moreover, the institute/college may be far less concerned with enhancing faculty strength in HSS departments, turning a deaf ear to their needs. What is often forgotten is that under the IIT structure all students have to take a certain number of credits in the HSS department Therefore, irrespective of faculty strength, students have to be taught This can lead to a situation such as in IIT-Delhi, where the studentteacher ratio is extremely skewered Under these circumstances, it is not possible to give quality attention to students who have variable language and comprehension skills, given their diverse socioeconomic backgrounds

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In RECs, where the HSS departments are very small they feel their existence is threatened by financial shortages faced by the colleges Although the All India Council of Technical Education has certain mandatory requirements for HSS courses in all engineering colleges, the importance of this can be corroded from the inside through inappropriate time-slotting, whereby students tend to skip rather than attend classes, or lack of adequate numbers of faculty However, a recent step by the government, to upgrade a certain number of RECs to NITs (National Institutes of Technology) has led to the non-service model of HSS being adopted even in these institutions Restoring the core model of the HSS disciplines in the true sense is necessary in institutes of technology Modelling the RECs on the line of IITs is a step forward

Two Cultures: The University and the Institute

Do the seeds of the difficulties of HSS departments in institutes of technology lie in the differential structure and character of the university and the institute? HSS disciplines flourish in a university as opposed to an institute atmosphere To begin with, the two kinds of organisational structures promote different kinds of work culture. The work of the HSS academic often happens as much outside the classroom as within it, in the cafeteria or in other common spaces like gardens and corridors. The university framework promotes democracy, dissent, openness, discussion and debate or 'indiscipline within discipline' HSS disciplines are nourished in non-hierarchical, democratic organisational frameworks that are not highly structured in terms of time. The scope for such interaction is often reduced in technology institutes that are necessarily more regimented and structured Such institutes are often apolitical, insulated, hierarchical and authoritarian Here, democratic discussion and dissentsion allowed to students is almost non-existent. The fear of bad grades scotches any questioning of authority

Furthermore, institutes imagine themselves as places for highly specialised training and knowledge production. The university, on the other hand, has been known as the locus for the production of knowledge in all disciplines, which allows the scope for exploration and for fundamental questioning, while nurturing the student as a human being Ideas, ideologies and world-views get formed here. The institute has to reimagine itself as a university where the unity of knowledge is maintained. This implies creating the space for various kinds of freedoms—the freedom to read, think, research and teach in our respective disciplines. The space for dissent too, has to be there. Although such institutes imagine themselves as being free of ideology, it is well known

that, in general, they tend to be repositories of conservative ideologies. This is clearly seen in the understated but well-known presence of sizable numbers of faculty members of several IITs showing allegiance to right-wing parties and groups. Moreover, in a broad sense, institutes of technology often act as if they are divorced from the real world — events that happen outside their walls and that do not concern them directly are not worthy of attention. This attitude reinforces the notion of technology and its products as a value-neutral enterprise

Yet, several IITs have harboured or produced maverick individuals who have broken out of the mould and taken to activism of various kinds. Thus, a few faculty members of leftist persuasion in IIT-Bombay and IIT-Kanpur have fought for mess workers rights or organised students to protest against oppression of the landless or react to communal riots. In IIT-Kanpur, several students are believed to have been influenced by the Naxalite movement. Students and faculty opposed the Emergency in 1975 leading to the arrest of some faculty members. This was one occasion when activists of the left and the right united to protest against the abrogation of civil rights in the country. IIT-Madras has faced some dalit activism and dealt with it with a heavy hand. In IIT-Delhi, some faculty and students helped victims of the pogrom against the Sikhs in 1984, and more recently, a few faculty members have attempted to sensitise students about the violence in Gujarat.

Some IITians have opted out of conventional engineering or management careers, taking up development-related issues and have been successful in setting up non-governmental organisations the Centre for Science and Environment, set up by Anil Agarwal of IIT-Kanpur, the Hazards Centre, set up by Dunu Roy of IIT-Bombay, who ran a successful experiment in development planning based on environmental mapping with a group called the Shahdol Group which worked in rural Madhya Pradesh, are examples (Deb 2004) More recently, Sandeep Pandey of IIT-Kanpur won the Magsaysay Award for his work on education for the underprivileged, through the foundation set up by him, Asha Among women IITians, Susan Chacko set up the South Asian Women's Network, but only once was she out of the IIT and in America (*Ibid*)

Gender issues have been on the backburner in most IITs, partly because until recently, the female-to-male ratio in most institutions was abysmally poor. There were few girl students and few female faculty members. The male-dominated atmosphere has worked against female faculty, who are generally looked upon with suspicion and as unnecessary competitors with liabilities such as child bearing and husbands! The glass ceiling prevails with women rarely being entrusted with admi-

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nistrative positions Recently, IIT-Bombay has taken the step of setting up a women's cell, with the prime goal of gender sensitisation of faculty, students and administration and IIT-Delhi has introduced a policy against sexual harassment

What is distinctive, though, is that none of the faculty members, who held definite ideological leanings, whether of the right or the left, propounded their views in the classroom. Teaching in the classroom was strictly technical and sacrosanct. The vast body of students remained unaffected by concerns outside the institute and the administration in most IITs did not look kindly upon disruption of institute functioning. Hence, the scope for the mass of the student body being sensitised to the socio-political-ethical frameworks of science and technology was not really created. Nor was a greater sense of concern with events outside the terrain of engineering and technology achieved.

If the institute needs to be asked to reinvent itself as something closer to a university, the Indian university could gain by adopting aspects of the work culture of the institute. The decline of the university in India is being attributed to an excess of the laissez-faire style of operation with minimal accountability of faculty and a lack of seriousness on the part of students. Privatisation of university education may not be the answer to this malaise, and other ways of making teachers and students responsive and responsible for their work need to be explored.

Model of HSS in Institutes of Technology: Opportunity in the Form of a New Turn in the Life Sciences

The problematic remains as to how to make HSS department more integrated with the rest of the institute. This can only be premised on a greater involvement of HSS faculty with other departments and institute activities. Although many HSS faculty play an important role in extracurricular activities and in developing interactive skills of students, this role is considered a 'frill benefit' and not recognised as turning the student into a complete human being

HSS departments in institutes of technology can be better integrated if there is a meaningful relationship with at least some engineering departments. What should be the ideal structure of the relationship between engineering and HSS disciplines/departments in institutes of technology? On what basis can we premise such a relationship? It is here that we have to raise the issue of how the gulf between the 'two cultures' can be bridged. While applauding the role of the engineer in society and in making science useful to society, Snow (1959) asked whether the engineer was merely an 'ignorant specialist'. He argued that the mutual

ignorance of the scientist/engineer and the literary/social science person would be disastrous. Science and humanities need to inform each other of their concerns

The new turn in biological and environmental sciences raises afresh the inherent embroilment of science and technology with ethical and social questions In his recent book, Our Posthuman Future, Francis Fukuyama (2002) looks at the dangers present in the biotechnology revolution He argues that National Commissions appointed by the government brought scientists together with learned theologians, historians, and bioethicists is evidence of the fact that it is aware of the deep intertwining of scientific, technical and humanist, and ethical issues. Similarly, I would argue that the environmental crisis can be interpreted as an opportunity for the rapprochement of science, social science and the humanities. Ecology is an area that brings together in a very compelling way, issues of natural science and engineering with those of society and of values and ethics. One only has to think of a dam like the Sardar Sarovar or a movement like Chipko to realise how intertwined these issue are Biotechnology and farmer's rights over their own knowledge, the politics of multinationals and governments in support of or opposition to GMOs are other such issues. Hence, ecology is a platform for the sciences (both pure and applied), the social sciences and the humanities to interact and to examine the basis of the world-view on which the modern world is built

A model for encouraging greater interaction between humanities/social sciences and engineering departments is through including 'best practice' (or worst practice) modules in relevant engineering courses. For example, civil engineering and social science/humanities could prepare an integrated module on issues such as large dams, biotechnology departments could, similarly, examine the introduction of GMOs or IPR issues relating to traditional knowledge. These would serve to sensitise students to the technical, environmental and social dimensions of the issue. As in the Stanford programme, these modules could be taught jointly by HSS, science and engineering faculty

Developing a Set of Core Courses

Developing a set of core courses, especially designed to be taught in institutes of technology is also worthy of consideration. These courses could be around the issues of development, environment, international economics, history and philosophy of science and technology, the ethical framework of technological choices. Conventional courses in sociology and, psychology need to be re-imagined to connect with the technology

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student. This often leads to humanities and social sciences rethinking their own accepted maxims and hence can be beneficial in more ways than one. Innovative courses such as art and technology, media, and technology, and environmental ethics, that bridge the concerns of the different disciplinary streams more directly, can help arrive at an understanding of common issues confronting a rapidly globalising and technologically driven world. Mainstreaming of social and environmental risk assessment in technology projects is another task that could bring the engineering and HSS departments closer.

Conclusion

The support of the larger educational bureaucracy and of the institute leadership is needed to maintain the appropriate balance between HSS and engineering in such institutes. This is dependent on a new imagery that restores a mutually symbiotic relationship between the 'two cultures'. The unity of knowledge, which alone can provide the framework for critically examining the world-view on which modernity is built, needs to be restored, based on principles of reciprocity and exchange between different ways of looking at the world Faculty members of HSS departments need to communicate more with their engineering colleagues to develop pedagogical instruments that serve to highlight the social context and framework of technology. At the same time, engineers need to be open to the historically constituted nature of science and technology and to realise that by virtue of these being human enterprises, they are not ideology-free In the modern world, one cannot escape the immense power of technology to do both good and harm, hence, it becomes doubly necessary for the humanities and social sciences and science and technology to keep the dialogue going - in this, sociology of knowledge has a significant role to play.

Notes

- 1 The following discussion is based on a study conducted in 2002 by the author in several Regional Colleges of Engineering, private engineering colleges, Polytechnics and in IIT Delhi A report on 'Social issues In Engineering Education' was prepared for the World Bank and the Government of India as part of its Engineering and Technical Education Quality Improvement Program Several RECs were upgraded to NITs (National Institutes of Technology) as part of this project
- 2 The Thapar College of Engineering in Patiala earns money by providing psychological testing to the general public, hence fulfilling another modern-day goal of the technological institute that of 'income generation'
- 3 On asking a student why he wanted to do Management after his BTech, he replied, 'Then I will be above the engineers'

4 Information based on interviews with several IITians who were part of or witness to such involvement

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Voice, Event and Narrative: Towards an Understanding of Everyday Life in Dharavi

Roma Chatterji

In his Welcome Address to the participants of the South Asia Workshop on 'The State of Sociology', Partha Nath Mukherji made a plea for a sociology that would have the self-confidence to be able to use indigenous concepts and to offer generalisations that were national and regional in scope (Mukherji in this issue) Let me confess at the outset that my paper does neither of these things I am interested in the phenomenology of everyday life as it occurs in unstable places. Thick description is, by definition, built into the phenomenological method What and how one describes are analytical procedures determined by the way one carves out one's object of study and the questions one puts to it. Thus, description (or ethnography) is the mode by which those of us who think of sociology as a discipline based on fieldwork address these questions. I think of ethnographic description as a way of carrying on a dialogue with sociological concepts that have emerged in other ethnographic sites. In the course of the dialogue, the concepts are modified. This is inevitable, as the concepts become embedded in new ethnographic contexts Perhaps this is what Mukherji means by the concept of indigenisation. Generalisations occur when concepts are translated/transferred from one field to another I think of this paper as an example of such a dialogue

How does one capture the heterogeneity of everyday life? Alfred Schutz (Schutz and Luckman 1973), one of the first sociologists to use the phenomenological method, said that people coped with heterogeneity and complexity in everyday life by assuming the 'natural attitude', that is, by taking stability for granted and by assuming that routinised structures of interaction would endure. Thus, everyday life, as far as the natural attitude is concerned, is not eventful. However, certain events like the Mumbai riots of 1992-93 do stick out, forever reordering our orientation to time, remaking life, as we know it. How does one study such singular events sociologically without diminishing their uniqueness? One perspective that foregrounds the eventfulness of life is the narrative approach. It allows one to explore the multiple registers of subjectivity and social practice without loosing the aspect of generalisation that is crucial to sociological understanding. The narrative approach

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allows the conceptual plane to be coextensive with the plane of experience Thus, it allows concepts to emerge from within the data itself and for the researcher to develop a dialogue, through the written text, between her discipline (sociology) and her field ¹

In this paper, I will be discussing the relationship between event and narrative through fieldwork in Dharavi (a slum in Mumbai) that I have been conducting with a colleague, Deepak Mehta, since 1995. Our interest has been in exploring the relationship between violence and everyday life specifically against the backdrop of the 1992-93 riots in Mumbai. What allows the multiple events that occurred within this period to be thought of within a singular frame? Were these multiple acts of violence one event or many? We have argued that it is the way in which events are emplotted within a narrative that give them the shape that they come to have over time (Mehta and Chatterji 2001). Thus, it is not merely the incidences of violence, but also the event of narration itself that is constitutive of the object of study. Why do I speak of narration as an event rather than as an activity or practice that is part of the rhythm of everyday life?

Narrative and Event

It was the American sociologist G H Mead who posited the notion of the 'emergent event' Some acts, he said, acquired social significance by 'sticking out' from the flow of time (Joas 1985) These acts are emergent events that have the ability to organise time into a past and a future. The event itself remains in the spacious present, acting as a bridge between the two temporal registers of past and future Recent sociological writings have used Mead's conception of the emergent event in conjunction with the narrative method to construct ethnographies of everyday life In a special volume of Social Science and Medicine on the narrativisation of illness, Linda Garo and Cheryl Mattingly (1994) discuss narrative agency They use the narrative method to relate concrete events and observable actions to an inner world of desire and motive Narrative agency does not posit notions of autonomy and coherent self-identity, rather, it speaks of multiple subject positions that are anchored within specific biographies Narrative becomes a way of understanding life in time

Thus, Veena Das (1995, 2000) views Partition as a 'critical event' that folds into the life trajectory in such a way that it creates new and unexpected consequences. In a series of papers on the riots of 1984 in Delhi and on the aftermath of partition in Punjab she describes the efforts that women make to recover the everyday life especially by coming to terms

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with the fragility of the 'normal' The violent event is not described directly, rather, it is made present through specific biographies. In one of her papers, Das talks of Asha, a young woman from Lahore. Asha was not directly affected by the violence of Partition but her conjugal family with whom she lived lost their fortune when they came to India as refugees. Das evokes a 'scene of ordinariness' to demonstrate the effect of the violent event Asha who was acknowledged as the widow of a much-loved brother became a liability after Partition, a drain on the family's resources and a sexual being available for experimentation within the conjugal family The 'poisonous' knowledge was never openly expressed either by Asha or by other women in the family They tried their best to keep it hidden, even though they acknowledged her suffering by accepting her remarriage, so as to repair the rupture in the family relationships Asha and her kinswomen created a community through suffering, through their common goal in nurturing relationships. In Das's work the event of Partition is not constituted as a violent moment, rather it is a rupture, the effects of which are felt long after the event has occurred. Nevertheless, this event is 'critical' to the extent that it destabilises the life-world, creating alternate biographies that are hidden behind the cultural roles that society expects its members to play

In our work on the narratives of violence, we have used the concept of event to construct overlapping perspectives on the violent events being narrated as well as the event of narration itself. We have studied the riots that took place in Mumbai in 1992-93 through the narratives of survivors. In these narratives, the incidents of violence were set in a time apart — a discrete and extraordinary time of the event — and were not experienced as being continuous with everyday life. Thus, the memories of the violence could not be placed in the same relationship as other past events. Rather the riot was experienced as effect, as bodily memory that gave rise to the feeling of dread when the date '6 December' came around. This is the date on which the Babri mosque was demolished by some Hindu fanatics, an event that preceded the riots in Mumbai. The riot has the quality of a critical event as it has reorganised the way in which the survivors now experience time. It continues to exist as a trace in their present.

The act of narration, the actual recounting of the incidents that made up the riot, became another event with its own temporal dimension that shaped the way the riot was objectified for our benefit. The riot and narratives about it were inextricably interwoven so that in some parts of Dharavi we heard narratives only in a group context, sitting in a community space, listening to people reminiscence of how the violent mob suddenly appeared on the boundary of their neighbourhood. In other

neighbourhoods, it was only by walking around with a few survivors, traversing the path of the violence that we were able to get the narratives of the event. It is as if the form the violence took and the trajectory that it followed also shaped the way it could be narrated.

We also found that the riot narratives coexisted with another type of narrative about relief and rehabilitation work. Activities that are thematised into one or other of the two types of narrative occurred simultaneously in people's discourse. However, while both speak about violence and the everyday, the style in which they do so is very different. Thus, in the riot narratives, the violence is described as an anonymous force that sweeps through Dharavi transforming heterogeneous social relationships into homogeneous, sectarians ones. Persons are robbed of agency, even as perpetrators of violent acts. The narratives describe all actions as reactions, as responses to anonymous forces. No one claimed to have initiated an act for which he or she was accountable. Nor did they recognise faces in the mobs that confronted them. They only spoke of hearing voices and sounds. All narratives were framed in the third person.

In contrast, acts of relief work restore agency and allow for expressing individual agency. The rehabilitation narratives reconstitute the complex subjectivity of actors as they move between different subject positions those of victim and perpetrator. They are couched in the personal voice and the identify acts of complicity as well as heroism.

It is not as if the relief-work narratives were about the remoralising of community life. The culture of impunity created by the violence and the solidification of communities into Hindus and Muslims after the riots have left their mark on the everyday life. However, by foregrounding individual agency and personal voice, the relief-work narratives do speak of a restoration some kind of heterogeneity to the fabric of social life.

Documentary Practices and the Genealogical Method

In the last section, I discussed the narrative method and its use in our work to track the trajectory of the event in the light of the fact that it is dispersed over several different sites (Foucault 1977) In this way, the narrative method allows us to reintroduce the register of the everyday that had been bracketed out of the riot narratives but is recovered by means of the relief work narratives

In this section, I discuss the genealogy of the violence In their separate but related ways, the narratives of both violence and relief work establish their genealogies, forging links with prior instances of violence or with acts of 'community formation' In this way, these genealogies are invested with a telos. The structure of the riot narratives that present the

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violence as a force divorced from individual or collective agency is also reflected in the descriptions of the Report of the Sri Krishna Commission (Mehta 2004) Its discursive structure, in turn, resonates with government reports produced during the colonial period. The event is framed as a kind of infection — communalism — that transforms Indians into two homogeneous communities — Hindus and Muslims — that are always opposed to each other. A large part of the Report is devoted to mapping the course of this infection across the city. The discursive structure of the Report resonates with other such reports in the way that it describes the violence.

We juxtapose the description of the violence in the Report with individual testimonies of survivors from Dharavi, specifically with the account of one man who lost a son in the police firing in 1992-93. Ali, who was 'selected' to give evidence before the Commission, because he had his son's post-mortem report, thought of this act as a way of bearing witness and of giving meaning to what was an absurd death. Documentary practices of the state create a space, which is used by Ali to try and reframe everyday life. He was quite frank in admitting to us that the Commission gave him a parchha (certificate) which allowed him to get compensation for his son's death and he was able to use the money to extend his business. People in Dharavi are conscious of the state's double role in their lives as an oppressive presence that makes for the instability of everyday life but also as a resource to be used strategically. There is a terrible irony in Ali's narrative 'The history of independent India is written in the reports of such riot commissions', he told my colleague

Following Michel Foucault's pioneering work, interested in addressing the state ethnographically have focused on the documentary practices by which the state makes society legible to itself In our work on slum rehabilitation, we show how operations of enumeration like the census carve out populations, but they also create new forms of community (Chatter 1 2003) Populations generated by practices of enumeration often begin to see themselves as communities with a capability to resist the very technologies of power-knowledge that help bring them into existence Thus, slum dwellers in Dharavi think of 1976, the year of the first slum census, as an important landmark in their lives because it marks a first step in their 'official' recognition as slum dwellers and residents of Mumbai Other steps in this recognition are the procurement of identity cards, receipt of electricity bills and ration cards Arjun Appadurai (2002) shows how such documentary practices serve as sites on which citizenship claims are articulated. They also become sites on which alternate identities are constructed. If events like the riot create a public space that is increasingly communalised, documentary practices that are used to secure everyday life also provide avenues for the emergence of an alternate public space Settlement histories of Dharavi talk about surveys and census operations as if they are ways of constituting new types of agency Old residents showed us government maps that they had managed to photocopy and kept as potential resources in the event of future conflict with neighbours and so on But, more importantly, such documentary practices help in the creation of a public voice, a voice that can transcend individual self-interest and speak for slum dwellers as a collective and abstract category

NGO's and the Public Voice

Between the exercises of mapping a population and the formation of concrete communities there is a vast gap. In Dharavi, as in other slums in Mumbai, the role of community based organisations and other NGO's in mediating this gap by generating community consciousness is significant. Our own fieldwork has been conducted with the help of one such organisation — Peoples Responsible Organisation for a Responsible Dharavi (PROUD) PROUD strives to forge links between different sections of Dharavi's population by turning common civic issues into social causes PROUD defines itself in terms of an 'action-based approach' Each one of its programmes, routed through specific 'issue-based' committees, is defined as an 'action' and the successful implementation of its goals is called a 'victory' Committees are often formed as a direct response to particular government directives.

By focusing on common civic problems rather than on the particular concerns of individuals or families, organisations like PROUD are able to generate a generalised and abstract form of social solidarity, a solidarity based on the principle of communicative rationality (Habermas 1996) I use the term 'public voice' to speak about this In Dharavi, the term 'public' is used for collective self-reference. The voice that speaks for the abstract public, articulates generalised social interest. The public voice is anchored in a public space, constituted by contractual relations freely entered upon by persons who form associations based on common interest. The public voice is distinguished from the 'individual voice' that speaks of private and, therefore, selfish concerns. The public voice, thus, refers to the collective authoring of the group by striving for the common good

Conclusion

Slums are typically described as spaces of urban disintegration, places at the margins where the state has abandoned its civic responsibilities 434 Roma Chatterji

(Desai 1991; Wacquant 1999). While it is important to document such processes of disintegration ethnographically, it is also important to describe everyday life in the slum, to explore people's subjectivity – processes by which they make the slum their home and through which they come to have a stake in the city of Mumbai. A phenomenology of life in the slum would include descriptions of survival strategies but also conceptions of a local moral world in which people stake a claim to a certain kind of life. Processes of governmentality are crucial in this articulation, not so much as a matter of official policy but as a result of the unintended consequences of particular government actions

Dharavi's scale – the conflicting identities that make up social life, the concentration of commercial activity in small spaces and the essential fragility of everyday life that is lived under the shadow of violence – makes it difficult to grasp as an object of study. We have tried to address this complexity by juxtaposing different registers of experience, thus retaining the sense of heterogeneity that is associated with the concept of everyday life

Notes

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1 I am grateful to N Jayaram for making this point at the Workshop

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Looping the Loop: Notes on the Relationship between Categories and Method in Some Recent Sri Lankan Social Science Research

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In the 'concept note' that was circulated to catalyse the Workshop this paper was written for, the organisers wrote

Quite often, theoretical orientations are considered superfluous in research Premium is on useful fact-finding, policy-oriented research that tells us why policies are not doing well, and how can they be made to work, or what alternative policies will do better, and so forth The basic premises of the why and how of policies remain unexamined

It is time that we subjected ourselves to issues of relevance and rigour For, it is not enough to do research in a very important substantive area. It is even more important that such research is conducted with methodological rigour and appropriateness

I am in broad agreement with this laudable call to action Most of my Sri Lankan colleagues would also be happy to agree with these sentiments, if they were to be basis for a funded international conference However, if not, and these were to be the basis of everyday intellectual endeavour, a majority might well disagree More often than not, questions of methodological rigour are shunted aside, with a series of inter-linked objections. It is worth delineating these claims, which are organised under the broad idea that that critique should be prescriptive. On this view, we do research to 'intervene' and, as such, these interventions must be worthwhile to the policy maker(s) and/or activists(s), who, these days, are one and the same person(s)

There are several recurring sub-themes to this claim that may be invoked with differing emphasis (1) we are in the Third World, so we do not have the luxury of 'pure' research, (11) pure research is fine for universities, but not for research institutes, and (111) whatever it is, it will not be funded, and, as such, we cannot do it, even if the research itself may not cost very much

It seems to me that these arguments, taken in varying proportions to each other, have won the day A good deal of social science research in

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Sri Lanka, where it is university based or research institute based, operates under this logic I should qualify this by saying, no, not all research works through this logic However, I will be surprised if some one can demonstrate that it is not growing to be the dominant trend. Therefore, what I propose is not an investigation of the causes of this trend, which is a worthy research topic in its own right, but a critical description of how analytical categories gets formulated under this epistemological regime

I should emphasise at this point that the set categories I choose for elaboration in this way – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, often abbreviated as PTSD, and its reformulations – are not easily set aside in favour of another set. In other words, I have picked a categorical formulation that I think is difficult, and challenging, without the interventionist imperatives I spelled out earlier. I should also note that I have been trying to construct a set of counter-categories in a large-scale research project that I have been directing, on the aftermath of Sri Lanka's civil war, in the past few years

П

It is certainly true, scholars and practitioners, working within different frameworks, have noted the difficulty they have faced when trying to 'name' the re-constitution of subjectivity that takes place after enormous social violation and dislocation 'Trauma' has emerged as one such dominant name for this reconstitution of subjectivity

PTSD became a standard medical category only in 1980, given its codification in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM III) and its assignment of a particular symptomatology This codification was subject to refinement in 1994. In brief, symptoms that can lead to a diagnosis of PTSD include exposure to event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury to self or others; response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror, persistent re-experiencing of event, intense physiological/psychological distress at exposure to symbolic cues, persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma. It is generally understood that these symptoms should persist for more than one month before a diagnosis of PTSD is made.

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Now, PTSD, like its conceptual cousins, Multiple Personality Disorder, now reformulated as Disassociative Identity Disorder (DID); or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and a host of others can be subjected to a

variety of critiques that relate to their empirical verifiability and logical stability, and historical production. They can also be taken apart by unravelling other categories that secure them Ian Hacking and Allan Young do offer such categorical critiques in their important works Rewriting the Soul (Hacking 1995) and The Harmony of Illusions (Young 1995) Hacking and Young are not arguing that DID or PTSD is not real. They are concerned with categorical self-reflexivity. In this vein, they suggest that these two categories are subject to what Hacking has called 'looping' 'People classified in a certain way tend to conform or grow into the ways that they are described, but they also evolve in their own ways, so that the classifications and descriptions have to be constantly revised' (1995–23). A sort of feedback effect, he calls it

TV

I now turn to the Sri Lankan context. The *locus classicus* in the description of post-PTSD medical practice would be Daya Somasundaram's *Scarred Minds* (1998), which concerns his ongoing, university hospital-based, psychiatric practice is the northern war zone. This work is, among other things, one of stunning courage — and Somasundaram describes contexts where the Government of Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Indian Peace Keeping Force, were all involved in continuing atrocities

Now Somasundaram does not offer critical evaluation of PTSD as such He suggests that PTSD is important because it allows victims to name the consequences of a set of life-altering experiences that they have undergone As such, it de-pathologies the victims. As Young has noted in his classic ethnography of the operation of PTSD in medical practices, a similar value is placed on Vietnam era veterans in the United States PTSD locates the causes of the patient's difficulty outside her or his own psychobiography

V

Arthur Klienman's (1995) cultural anthropological evaluation of PTSD is different from Young's His argument is that there are several major problems with PTSD symptomatology. Three of his points are (i) that there is a sharp division between the everyday and the extraordinary in relation to the traumatic event, (ii) that grief and mourning should 'normally' work according to a relatively short time-line, and (iii) that states of suffering and sadness cannot be normal and normative states of being. One of the central points he makes is that the individualisation of

the symptoms carries an assumption of an ideal typical liberal subject with a well-developed interiority. What this critique implies is that, though the relationship of 'self' to the 'social' must be through specific conditions, it cannot be simply taken for granted

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I now turn to the work of two Sri Lankan scholars, Ananda Galappatti (2003) and Nishani Samaraweera (2003), who have been trying to understand the effects of large-scale long-term violence in Sri Lanka Their work attempts to build on the critique that Klienman and others make of PTSD In fact, decentring PTSD as a category appears to be the aim of their work, which then seeks to socialise 'PTSD' in a different categorial framework.

Both Galappatti and Samaraweera are concerned with the Vavuniya and Monaragala districts where there have been intense and widespread rules of terror in recent years – in Vavuniya with respect to the war between the LTTE and Government of Sri Lanka, and in Monaragala with respect to the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) insurrection While Galappatti wants to decentre PTSD, he does want to retain the category 'trauma', he would reformulate PTSD as 'insidious trauma', a category that derives from the work of Maria P Root's paper 'Women of Color and Traumatic Stress in "Domestic Captivity" Gender and Race as Disempowering Statuses' (1996) Before I get to what Galappatti means by 'insidious trauma', let me read his text against itself, for a moment, to demonstrate what might be hidden in this analytical excises the looping of the loop

Very early on in his argument, Galappatti cites a funding proposal written by a Sri Lankan NGO, the Colombo Family Rehabilitation Centre, concerned in a therapeutic sense with the question of 'trauma'

It is easy to overlook the need for psychological care because it is not a need felt even amongst the traumatised. This can be attributed to the inherent reluctance of the Sri Lankan to see his/her problem as a psychological one. The tendency is to seek medical explanation and allopathic treatment for what is clearly a psychological manifestation. The fact, remains, however, that they have been traumatised and this must be addressed (Colombo Family Rehabilitation Centre's Peace Programme Research Proposal, quoted in Galappatti 2003–116)

Consider this set of statements To begin with, the overtly pedagogic nature of the claims the recipients of the NGOs therapeutic practices do not see themselves traumatised They do not see their problems as

psychological Yet they must, because, according to the proposal, it is a 'fact' Part of the work of this NGO, and others like it, is to make intelligible to the 'people', or more specifically the clients of the NGO, a set of specific categories. Here, it is 'trauma', followed by 'psychological care'.

Galappatti, I said, wants to replace PTSD with 'insidious trauma' For him, the latter category is helpful in understanding how an awareness of 'being female, being of a particular ethnicity' or in other words, 'an unchanging aspect of one's identity' is a legitimate 'psychological hardship' (*Ibid* 126-27) The project here is to suture what in another register might be called social oppression with what might be called PTSD. This has therapeutic implications in Galappatti's work he advocates what he calls 'self-actualisation' as 'liberating', he sees this as a getting beyond 'passive' understandings of women's suffering I am not concerned here to agree or disagree with Galappatti on the politics of 'self-actualisation' Rather, I wish to point out the stitching of analysis to advocacy in one and the same analytical framework. What remains then is not a critical account of PTSD-related diagnostics and therapy, but rapidly reformulated concept that is advocated as a replacement.

It is already clear in Galappatti's work that there are many NGOs working within therapeutic framework that follows the idea of 'trauma' Samaraweera, whose work appears to be associated with Galappatti's, and who cites his work, tells us that such NGOs have 'mushroomed' in many parts of Sri Lanka, she estimates, in a paper published in 2003, that there are fifty such organisations in the country. Her critique of this 'mushrooming' is not radical, it is simply limited to a reformist one, better training for NGO personnel will lead to better practice, is the argument

What is fascinating from my point of view in this presentation is that there has been another category shift that was signalled but not fully made in Galappatti. The socialisation of 'trauma' is now complete, the word does not even appear in Samaraweera's work. In Samaraweera, Klienman's point of the need to problematise the relation of self to society is collapsed into a claim about the ever-present sociality of 'psychological effects'. This is not an argument against psychology, which would be that there are social effects of war, but not psychological ones Rather, this is a complete socialisation of a psychological argument. While for Galappatti, 'trauma' appeared in quotes, 'psychological suffering' seemed to be a more approved category, as did 'stress'. In Samaraweera, this has disappeared, the entire analytical load is carried by the therapeutic strategy — psychosocial support. As in a sentence like this 'the prolonged armed conflict in Sri Lanka has highlighted the need

for psychosocial support services and structures that could facilitate the provision of and access to such services' (2003–234) Now, I reiterate, that finding stable semantic field to name that which was once called PTSD is difficult. Granted However, dissolving the object entirely? Samaraweera does not seem to worry about this, since her concern is the better provision of psychosocial support services. This is a transformation of what in Galappatti was called 'self-actualisation'. While, in Galappatti, diagnosis and therapy were both separate and worried over, only to concatenate into advocacy in the final paragraphs, in Samaraweera, they have been collapsed from the beginning

VΠ

The loop, I want suggest, has been looped by this remarkable methodological practice which has through a kind of feedback, a la Hacking description, dissolved almost completely what was once an analytical category at the heart of the question. How do we name the re-constitution of subjectivity that takes place after enormous social violation and dislocation? The answer provided by Sri Lankan social scientists is an odd one it does not have a name, but it does have a therapy

A consideration of how this implicit conclusion comes about has been at the core of this paper. In my view, the operation of the loop, as it were, is governed by the objections to 'rigour' which are constantly raised by researchers. The desire to produce knowledge about the society and intervene in it simultaneously, enabled by the same categories, in the same epistemological field, lead in this remarkable case dissolution of research object itself.

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Studying Communal Riots in India: Some Methodological Issues

Vinod K. Jairath

What are called 'communal riots' in India started during the emergence of mass politics in the 1920s and have persisted after the Independence These riots are essentially an urban phenomenon and have been largely concentrated in specific sites within certain cities and towns, resulting in considerable number of deaths, mostly of the poor, and loss of property

It is a matter of concern that sociologists in India have largely ignored this persistent social phenomenon, just as there is very limited research carried out by Indian sociologists on Muslims and other minorities. The shift from early functionalist perspective on village and caste to structuralist debates on caste and religion did not change the focus of sociology in India from the consensual model of Hindu India. Dissenting voices were heard later on with the research on social movements of backward classes and dalits, caste and class violence in the aftermath of Green Revolution, and feminist concerns with the invisibility of women in sociology in India. Voices of the minorities, especially Muslims and Christians, are only now beginning to be heard in sociological research (see, for example, Robinson 2003, Robinson and Clarke 2003).

After the initial preoccupation with functionalist and structuralist perspectives, the key division in sociological or social science perspectives is between positivists and constructivists. Sometimes, this division is interpreted in a simple manner as the choice between the use of quantitative or qualitative techniques of data collection, though actual research methodological strategies are a lot more complex. Whereas positivists claim to be dealing with 'facts,' constructivists consider intersubjectively constructed representations and discourses to be important in lived experiences of communities and societies. Similarly, theoretical concepts and terms such as the Orient, democracy, secularism, social identity and social capital, which are sometimes presented as ahistorical and objectively defined, are seen to be constituted in specific historical contexts and, therefore, their meaning is contestable. What is projected as objective, rational and scientific research is also laden with political choices This needs to be demonstrated by examining methodological strategies adopted in specific research

In this paper, two recent books, based on major long-term research on Hindu-Muslim relations and communal riots in India, both by politi-

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cal scientists, are examined from the point of methodological perspective and implied political choices. Also included for brief examination are two studies, both on Hindu-Muslim relations and communal riots in the city of Hyderabad, a book by a psychoanalyst and an unpublished paper by another political scientist. The latter two are based in India, whereas the former two are based in American universities.

Ashutosh Varshney (2002), through a large-scale survey in six cities of India, including Hyderabad, has attempted to explain, not only why communal riots occur persistently in some cities but also why Hindu-Muslim riots do not occur in others. He constructs what he calls 'institutionalised peace system' based on inter-communal engagement in contrast to Paul Brass's 'institutionalised riot system' Brass (2003) carried out his study over a period of thirty-eight years (1961-1999) in the town of Aligarh and examined the phenomenon of recurrence of Hindu-Muslim riots 'at a single site' (that is, Aligarh) Sudhir Kakar (1996) has analysed the production of a particular (1990) Hindu-Muslim riot in Hyderabad using a psychoanalyst's perspective Javeed Alam, in an unpublished paper titled 'Inter-Community Life in Hyderabad Reconfigurations' (2001), has analysed the impact of social structural changes in Hyderabad during the last 10-15 years on Hindu-Muslim relations

All the four studies are carried out by scholars from disciplines other than sociology It is indeed strange that the phenomenon of communal tension and violence should have received negligible attention from sociologists in India. As Nasreen Fazalbhoy pointed out, 'In the past few years the paucity of sociological material on Muslims has appeared to have more ominous implications, given the growing "common sense" understanding of Muslims as outsiders or foreigners, with allegiances outside India' (2005) Similarly, writing about the neglect of studies on Christianity in India, Rowena Robinson states that 'This neglect has extended to the study of all non-Hindu communities (for want of a better term at this moment) in India' (2003 12) Apart from the impact of theoretical perspectives like Dumont's, she refers to the role of the Aryan myth, a product of Orientalist knowledge, and states that 'The myth also has its reverberations in contemporary politics of identity and religion and on popular discourses in general' (Ibid 13) Ouite frequently. religious identities are viewed as mature and frozen which can be taken for granted and need no discussion In fact, the constructions of identities based on religious texts can differ enormously from identity constructions based on practice, and they require a diachronic approach in understanding the temporal and spatial variations in communal peace and conflict

However, whatever is the nature of conceptual differences or variations, it is generally agreed that ethnic or religion-based conflict and associated violence has remained a serious problem and continued after the Independence. It has generated several research problems which have changed with different theoretical/ideological orientations which, in turn, have employed different research methodologies and methods. For example, it is asked whether communal conflict is inevitable in India because of some basic fault line or 'old animosities' between Hindus and Muslims? Or, have Hindus and Muslims always coexisted with a spirit of tolerance in 'composite' or 'Ganga-Jamuni' cultures? Or, do we need to have, as Shahid Amin (2002) has argued, a 'non-sectarian history of sectarian strife' while emphasising that communal conflict and associated violence cannot be just wished away?

Similarly, are clear-cut and well-defined ethnic identities a creation of modernity, colonialism and nationalism which transformed the traditional 'fuzzy' identities? Are these 'homogenised' religious identities manipulated at will by political elites to mobilise passive masses to meet their own economic and political interests? Can we begin to listen to subaltern voices, mainly the victims of communal violence, by examining popular cultural narratives? How and why do certain social identities come to the fore under certain kinds of identity-threats? How do 'victims of violence' reconstitute their self and the 'Other'? How does 'communal violence' change inter-community relations? And why do communal riots occur in some places and not in others and during some periods and not the others?

These are questions that have been examined through interdisciplinary research. The way a problem is defined depends critically on how some of the key concepts are defined. These, in turn, shape the methodological approach adopted and the choice of data collection techniques. Here understanding of 'religious identity' critically informs the methodological strategy. This is examined through the four selected texts of Kakar, Varshney, Brass, and Alam

Kakar's *The Colours of Violence* was first published in 1995 Varshney's *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life Hindus and Muslims in India* was published in 2002, and has been variously described as 'an outstanding work of social science', 'a landmark synthesis', 'methodologically exemplary and theoretically rich', 'innovative' and 'empirically convincing' Brass's book followed soon after Varshney's, in 2003 Alam's paper was presented at a conference at South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University in 2001 Each one of these works has adopted a different methodological strategy for understanding of religious conflict and violence

In this paper, Varshney's work receives more attention than others. This is because his work has been applied for being 'methodologically exemplary'. However, his conclusions can be seen as inadequate and politically conservative, though the study is presented as objective and scientific. His explanatory variable of inter-ethnic civic engagement itself needs to be explained in terms of social structural heterogeneity and historical-political specificities in each case.

Scholars, social activists and journalists have produced a large number of ethnographies of specific communal riots as case studies Varshney introduces very systematic comparative analysis for riot-prone and peaceful cities. Brass thinks that comparison can be made between riot-prone and peaceful *mohalla*s or localities within a single city. In any case, comparative studies will become more focused on certain specific issues and will be able to utilise the vast data available in earlier ethnographies of communal conflict and violence in future

Understanding of the concept of social identity, particularly religious identity, is crucial for organising studies on communal violence. It is important to recognise that broad homogenised categories of 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' cannot be taken for granted. These are sometimes fuzzy, sometimes fragmented, and during some periods and contexts integrated. Homogenisation is a process that needs to be analysed and the role of homogenising discourses and representations, that sometimes demonise the 'Other', recognised

In studies on communal conflict and violence, it is essential to have a historical perspective to be able to explain why riots tend to take place more frequently in some cities and not in others and, also, why during certain periods and not in others. Varshney identifies the most riot-prone cities but cannot explain the periods of peace in those riot-prone cities. Similarly, Brass's 'institutionalised riot system' seems to suggest some kind of permanence and inevitability, though he is much more sensitive to the heterogeneity in social structure.

It is important to focus on the complex heterogeneity among Hindus and Muslims Alam's study of Hyderabad shows how economic and social changes among different castes and groups transform the conditions from tension to desire for peaceful coexistence. This focus on the possibility of change is missing in both Varshney and Brass Similarly, the role of the state and electoral arithmetic cannot be ignored for explaining periods of conflict and peace.

Finally, it will be clear from our discussion in the following sections that communal conflict needs to be studied in a broader framework that encompasses caste, class and religious conflict and violence The framework must be able to explain why Hindu-Muslim riots here, Shia-Sunni

riots there, inter-caste violence elsewhere and class antagonism in certain regions occur at different times. We need a general theory that can explain spatial and temporal variations of conflict between different sets of communities or categories.

Perspectives in Studies on Communal Violence

In the study of communal conflict and violence in India, the basic distinction in perspectives is between essentialism and constructivism. *Essentialism*, in its 'primordialist' position, asserts that there is a fundamental difference between Hinduism and Islam, or between the cultures of Hindus and Muslims, and, therefore, contemporary ethnic conflicts can be traced back to 'older animosities' between these groups. 'In this view, inter-religious strife and riots that resemble cotemporary Hindu-Muslim conflict were present, even endemic, in pre-modern times' (Brass 2003: 25) Therefore, essentialists find the existence of strong communal identities even before colonialism

Constructivism, on the other hand, challenges the hegemony of categories and representations presented as natural, permanent or objective and scientific It attempts to recover the categories and representations of subaltern groups and communities whose voices were not heard in elite discourses In the Indian context, constructivists take 'the position that communalism is a cover that hides a multiplicity of mainly political and economic causes . ' (Ibid) Regarding the formation of religious identities, they argue that 'Hındu-Muslım consciousness and conflict are largely modern constructions, in which the British colonial rulers played a major role, either through deliberate "divide and rule" policies or through the ways in which they categorised, classified, and counted the various peoples of India' (Ibid) Constructivism leads to the position that contemporary communal riots in India are deliberately engineered This view encompasses some other explanatory perspectives such as instrumentalism, functionalism, and post-structuralism by way of deconstruction and recovery of 'representations and discourses'.

Instrumentalism suggests the 'purely instrumental use of ethnic identity for political or economic purposes by the elite, regardless of whether they believe in ethnicity' (Varshney 2002 27) Similarly, Brass uses what he calls 'functional analysis' by adopting 'one of the more common uses of the term function, that of use or utility' and speaks of 'the functional utility of the persistence of Hindu-Muslim riots in India for a wide variety of interests, groups, and organisations, including ultimately the Indian state' (Brass 2003 23-24)

A frequent methodological device used in constructivist studies is that of analysing representations of self and the other, communal discourses by religious and political leaders, and blame assignment or displacement through post-riot constructions of explanations Such devices attempt to show how mutually hostile past and present are constituted which generate hate between communities and homogenise diverse groups, and sometimes fuzzy identities, for political mobilisation Varshney creates confusion by splitting constructivism into the awkward categories of postmodernist and unpostmodernist orientations. For him. the postmodernist orientation emphasises 'the construction of group categories by the knowledge elite, its promotion by centres of power, and its effects on the "people" (2002 32), whereas the unpostmodernists emphasise 'alternative ethnicities, alternative nationalities, alternative identities, some of which may undermine the existing order' (*Ibid* 33) This absurd and faulty distinction is made by Varshney in order to assert that social scientific knowledge has to be built on 'facts' whereas 'Unpostmodernist constructivists do not believe that facts are impossible to establish' (Ibid), the postmodern constructivists recognise only discourses and narratives. He argues that 'standard social science' is made possible only on the basis of 'facts'. We need not bother here to discuss the status of 'facts' even in 'standard natural science' after the work of Thomas Kuhn and others However, it is important to state that all propositions based on the so-called 'facts' are theoretically governed That is what paradigms and scientific communities are all about

Nevertheless, Varshney finds some merit in constructivism, though it is seen to be inadequate to explain the difference between peace and violence

Constructivism explains why *some* ethnic cleavages – black versus white, not Protestant versus Catholic, in the United States, Hindu versus Muslim, not Hindu versus Parsi, in India – become 'master cleavages', acquiring remarkable staying power, arousing frequent bitterness, and causing awful violence But constructivism, as it is practiced, is unable to account for why the *same* cleavage – Hindu-Muslim, black-white, or Catholic-Protestant – is the source of violence in some parts of a country, not in others (*Ibid* 27)

Finally, we arrive at Varshney's own approach to 'explaining' ethnic violence and peace He proceeds in the name of social science His study is a 'survey', based on a controlled experiment, involving a rigorously selected sample, and he tests three hypotheses all of which are rejected He, then, claims that the explanatory proposition emerges in an unbiased manner. 'Though not anticipated when the project began, the pre-exist-

ing local networks of civic engagement between the two communities stand out as the single most important proximate cause' (italics added, *Ibid* 9)

Varshney presents his work in a manner of unbiased objective disinterestedness and 'facts-speak-for-themselves' attitude However, he looks at 'variance' pattern somewhat like R D Putnam's (1993) Italian study and, like Putnam, also discovers, the significance of civic engagement structures Varshney's intra-community and inter-community networks are so akin to 'bonding' social capital and 'bridging' social capital which emerge from the Putnam study Varshney finds that 'Civil society is the missing variable in all available traditions of inquiry' (2002 39) This reminds us of the World Bank argument that 'social capital is the missing link' in explaining the variance in development performance. The social capital framework exploded exponentially in the late 1990s and the early twenty-first century and has been criticised for depoliticising the development discourse Varshney does the same to the discourse on communal conflict

The Different Approaches

The four studies included here provide a good diversity in methodology Kakar carried out his study in Hyderabad soon after one of the most violent communal riots there in 1990 Alam's fieldwork was carried out in Hyderabad during the late 1980s and in 1999-2000 Brass studied repeated communal violence in the city of Aligarh over a period of four decades, including the 1990s Thus, these three are intensive studies of single sites Varshney's comparative study of six cities in the 1990s included, besides Hyderabad and Aligarh, Lucknow, Calicut, Surat, and Ahmedabad All these studies were conducted before the 2004 general elections in which the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and its allies lost power at the Centre and in some of the states The 1990s had seen a sharp rise and dominance of BJP in Indian politics

Kakar's study is based on intensive interviews focused on a very small sample Alam has looked at different caste and other groups and focused on the nature of change in their status. Brass has put different mohallas or localities of the entire city of Aligarh under microscope over a long period of time, and analysed a series of communal riots in terms of the social structure of riot-pione and peaceful zones. Varshney's is an extensive study spread over six cities, based on more than 800 interviews where the respondents comprise a systematically selected stratified sample. Whereas Kakar and Varshney treat Hindus and Muslims as undifferentiated homogenised categories, Alam and Brass have focused on

the heterogeneity within these categories and demonstrated its significance in understanding communal riots and their absence.

Different methodological strategies allow different insights. It will be clear from our discussion that rigour and quantification by themselves do not necessarily produce better understanding of a social phenomenon. Rigour is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. This can be seen from the following discussion of different approaches, in the four selected studies, to communal conflict.

Kakar's study deals with the structure of conflict and violence by looking at the December 1990 Hindu-Muslim riots in Hyderabad, he started his fieldwork the next year Describing his objectives and approach in the preface, he states

My own aspirations in this book are modest. They are to provide a way of looking at conflict — the psychoanalyst's way — so as to deepen the understanding provided by other disciplines. I have tried to bring out the subjective, experiential aspects of conflict between religious groups, to capture the psychological experience of being Hindu or a Muslim when one's community seems to be ranged against the other in a deadly confrontation (1996 viii)

The focus of Kakar's study is on understanding the point of view of different actors, when the wounds and memory are still raw and fresh after a riot. Dealing with a subject like violence, he emphasises more the analyst's sensibility rather than methodological expertise or rigour

I leave my accustomed clinical moorings to enter the world of social violence with nothing more than what is called a psychoanalytic sensibility

The core of the analyst's sensibility does not lie in clinical expertise or in a specific way of observing and interpreting people's words and actions. The core is empathy (*Ibid* 4)

So armed with empathy, Kakar carries out his study in an intensely engaged mode of observing and interviewing. It must be noted that he started his study soon after probably the worst riot in Hyderabad. He makes his methodological approach amply clear when he states

In my own account of religious violence, it is (the) different yet interdependent modes of engaging with persons and events of this study, the keeping alive of the tension between the immersive and reflective parts of my self, the quest not to let the experiencing self get buried under the agenda of a self that would rather organise and interpret the experience, that I seek to capture in my writing of this book (*Ibid* 5) The key concept in studies of ethnic or religious conflict is that of 'social identity'. A scholar's understanding of this concept is crucial in organising the study For instance, the concept of 'fuzzy' identity is critical to Shail Mayaram's study of Meos of Mewat (1997) Kakar sees the self, which he uses synonymously with identity, as made up of a 'system of reverberating representational worlds, each enriching, constraining, and shaping the others' However, certain perceived threats to a particular aspect of identity could announce the birth of a specific sense of community Brass finds 'a kind of psychological essentialism' and 'objectification of religious difference' in Kakar's analysis (2003 29) This is perceived especially because of the timing of Kakar's study, soon, that is, after a major riot However, at conceptual level, Kakar argues that

. none of these constituent inner worlds is 'primary' or 'deeper', that is, there is no necessity of assuming some kind of hierarchical ordering of aspects of identity or an 'archaeological' layering of the various inner worlds, although at different times the self may be predominantly experienced in one or other representational mode (1996 242).

Kakar then lists various identity threats that have been highlighted in the literature in relation to the question of Hindu-Muslim confrontational identities. Some of these threats are: clash of economic interests, forces of modernisation and globalisation which lead to 'feelings of loss and helplessness' and the 'humiliation caused by the homogenising and hegemonising impact of the modern world which pronounces ancestral, cultural ideals and values as outmoded and irrelevant', perceived discrimination by the state, and changing political constellations such as those which accompany the end of empires. For Kakar, 'The identity threats coutlined above do not create a group identity but merely bring it to the fore' (1996–241). An awareness of 'We are' then starts a process of confrontation with the 'We are' of other groups, and the process of integration and homogenisation into broad catègories, in that situation, gathers momentum

Given this conceptualisation of social identity, then, 'With evidence drawn from interviews with men, women, and children, psychological tests and speech transcripts of Hindu and Muslim "fundamentalists", Kakar analyses 'the fantasies, social representations, and modes of moral reasoning about the out-groups – "them" – that motivate and rationalise arson, looting, rape, and killing' (*Ibid* ix) His field data is based primarily on interviews with members of one extended Pardi family (the small Hindu Pardi community being repeated victims of religious

violence), a poor Muslim family from Karwan, and some 'activists' of violence – the actual killers during the riots. In addition to these interviews, he has analysed the speech transcripts of a Hindu and a Muslim 'fundamentalist' to mobilise people in bringing their religious identities to the forefront and aggressively define the 'us-them' relationship Neither of these speeches was made in Hyderabad

Kakar has produced an impressive ethnography of violence to contribute to our understanding of ethic strife. This kind of ethnography could have been produced only through intensely engaged mode of inquiry, making use of empathy as the key tool of data collection. However, analysis and results would be quite different if the study was carried out at a time of peace, as can be seen from Alam's study.

In contrast to Kakar's study, with its 'discourses and representations', Varshney's 'project' is an example of organising a rigorous nation-level 'survey' in six cities. For Varshney, conceptualising ethnic identity is not a problem. He takes ethnic identity as given. The problem is in making a distinction between ethnic conflict, ethnic violence, and ethnic identity (2002–24-26). Ethnic identities can lead to ethnic conflict but not necessarily to violence. 'If ethnic protest takes an institutionalised form in parliaments, in assemblies, in bureaucracies, or on the streets it is conflict all right, but not violence' (*Ibid*—25). He goes on to argue that 'Ethnic identities by themselves do not produce violence, they may coexist with peace conceptualised as above' (*Ibid*.) With this understanding of ethnic identities, Varshney is interested in exploring the relation between ethnic identities and peace, and not just violence. He formulates his research question logically, in an experimental mode.

Sooner or later, scholars of ethnic conflict are struck by a puzzling empirical regularity in their field Despite ethnic diversity, some places – regions, nations, towns or villages – manage to remain peaceful, whereas others experience enduring patterns of violence Similarly, some societies, after maintaining a veritable record of ethnic peace, explode in ways that surprise the observer and very often the scholar as well. Variations across time and space constitute an unresolved puzzle in the field of ethnicity and nationalism.

How does one account for such variations? (2002 5-6)

It is indeed interesting that this method of looking at significant variance, which is taught to every undergraduate student of sociology and social anthropology as the 'comparative method', is so sparingly used in India. The comparative method does require a great deal of methodological rigour, and sometimes, an understanding of quantitative techniques. And, probably, this is a disincentive for many scholars in

social sciences, particularly in sociology. Varshney, putting this method on a high pedestal, argues that

until we study ethnic peace, we will not be able to have a good theory of ethnic conflict. Placing variance at the heart of new research is likely to provide by far the biggest advances in our understanding of ethnicity and ethnic conflict. Despite rising violence, many communities in the world still maintain their interethnic tensions without taking violent steps (2002 6)

However, this variance becomes frozen in time for Varshney and he ends up with a kind of essentialism just like in R D Putnam's Italian study (1993) It prevents him from seeing and explaining the possibility of change For Varshney, the basic unresolved puzzle is to explain not only the persistence of 'communal riots', as the violent Hindu-Muslim conflicts are generally known in India, or 'ethnic conflicts', a term preferred by Varshney, in certain towns and cities but also their absence in other towns and cities. How does one account for variations across time and space? The logic of his research strategy is formulated very precisely.

With isolated exceptions, uncovering commonalities across the many cases of violence has been the standard research strategy. This strategy will continue to enlighten us, but it can give us the building blocks of a theory, not a theory of ethnic conflict. The logic underlying this proposition is simple, often misunderstood, and worth restating Suppose that on the basis of commonalities we find that interethnic economic rivalry (a), polarised party politics (b), and segregated neighbourhoods (c) explain ethnic violence (X). Can we, however, be sure that our judgments are right? What if (a), (b), and (c) also exist in peaceful cases (Y)? In that case, either violence is caused by the intensity of (a), (b), and (c) in (X), or, there is an underlying and deeper context that makes (a), (b), and (c) conflictual in one case but not in the other, or, there is yet another factor (d), which differentiates peace from violence. It will, however, be a factor that we did not discover precisely because peaceful cases were not studied with the conflictual ones (2002 6)

Therefore, Varshney adopts the methodological strategy of 'paired comparisons' Based on his master research question, he selected three pairs of cities. Aligarh and Calicut, Hyderabad and Lucknow, and Ahmedabad and Surat. The first three, selected from each pair, are among the most violence-prone cities in India. This is arrived at by counting the number of communal riots and number of deaths in such riots by examining the daily *Times of India*, covering a span of forty-six

years (1950-95) The others, Calicut, Lucknow, and Surat, taken as peaceful cities, have roughly the same percentage of Hindu-Muslim population as the city these are paired with Apart from the demographic features, some other key features are used for control in each case

Similarly, sampling for interviews is very rigorously planned in the Varshney study. One hundred thirty interviews with city elites were carried out by Varshney himself, twelve research assistants – six Hindus and six Muslims – carried out 700 'cross-section' interviews, stratified on the basis of literacy levels. There were further controls of localities in which interviews were conducted

The study brings 'forms of civic engagement' into the centre stage of understanding Hindu-Muslim conflict Varshney's focus is on inter-communal, and not intra-communal, networks of civic life. Inter-communal networks are divided into 'associational' and 'everyday' forms of civic engagement He concludes'

Both forms of engagement, if robust, promote peace, contrariwise, their absence or weakness opens up space for communal violence. Of the two, the associational forms turn out to be sturdier than everyday engagement, especially when people are confronted with the attempts by politicians to polarise ethnic communities (*Ibid* . 3-4)

On the other hand, Brass tries to understand the phenomenon of persistence of Hindu-Muslim riots in India, the periods of 'great waves' of violence such as 1923-27, 1937-38, 1946-48, and 1989-93, killing of many more Muslims than Hindus in most of the riots, and what interests are served by the riots. This he tries to do by focusing on a 'single site' which is the city of Aligarh in the state of Uttar Pradesh. He has examined almost every communal riot in Aligarh since 1961. His conclusions are quite different from those of Varshney's.

For Brass, the process of riot production can be divided into three phases or stages 'preparation and rehearsal', 'enactment' and 'post hoc explanation,' comprising 'blame displacement' What transforms small, trivial precipitating incidents into large-scale riots is an 'institutionalised riot system' which is described by Brass as

a perpetually operative network of roles whose functions are to maintain communal hostilities, recruit persons to protect against or otherwise make public or bring to the notice of the authorities incidents presumed dangerous to the peace of the city, mobilise crowds to threaten or intimidate persons from the other community, recruit criminals for violent actions when it is desired to 'retaliate' against persons from the other community,

and, if the political context is right, to let loose widespread violent action (2003 258)

Such an institutionalised system, which is at work constantly during the periods of both peace and violence, is sustained by the essentialist communal discourses which demonise the 'other' and create fear and resentment based on hostile stereotypes

Varshney's response to Brass would be that despite the existence of an institutionalised riot system in Aligarh and persistence of a communal discourse, had there been a strong inter-community civic engagement in the form of various types of associations such as 'Business associations, professional organisations, reading clubs, film clubs, sports clubs, festival organisations, trade unions, and cadre-based political parties' (2002 3), then the chances of communal violence would have reduced However, the absence of strong inter-community civic engagement cannot be taken as given – and then used to explain riots – rather the absence itself needs to be explained Varshney tells us how communalism emerged in Aligarh in the first instance

Communalism in Aligarh emerged because a declining Muslim aristocracy, part of the ruling class in pre-British times, was unable to come to terms with a framework of political participation that relied on elections, not nominations and quotas Rather than accepting the egalitarian implications of democratic rule, the former Muslim aristocrats wanted to protect their privileges, to which the rising Hindu middle classes were opposed (2002 122)

Varshney traces the Aligarh path through a diagram in the following way From 'Prior existence of Hindu-Muslim cleavages in politics' to 'No Hindu-Muslim links forged' to 'Civic structure promotes communal polarisation and violence' He finds 'a communal consciousness' in Aligarh, 'not a consciousness that builds bridges' (*Ibid* 125) However, he fails to explain the 'prior existence of cleavages' and 'communal consciousness' there

Taking up the example of the situation 'Between 1989 and 1992, when the Hindu nationalist agitation to destroy the Baburi mosque in Ayodhya led to unprecedented violence in much of India', Varshney states that 'Peace committees in Aligarh often tended to be intrareligious, not inter-religious They are formed at the neighbourhood level to protect the co-religionists from a possible attack from the other communities' (*Ibid.*: 123) In this context, however, he does not mention that Aligarh has a long history of Hindu-Muslim riots from the period

1923-27 to 1946-48, and then in 1961, 1971, 1972, 1978, 1979, 1988, 1989, and 1990-91 These riots, over a long period of time, have created polarisation and homogenisation of communities (see Brass 2003 70-131) After his examining the perception by the Hindu nationalists of the role of Aligarh Muslim University in the creation of Pakistan, and keeping in view the long history of riots, where the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) is known to have killed scores of Muslims and the state police personnel have just stood by and watched the killing of Muslims by Hindus, it is ridiculous of Varshney to arrive at the conclusion that Aligarh is more riot prone because there are not enough inter-community associations. However, his conclusion is arrived at after much methodological rigour and impeccable logic used to set aside every other explanation of Hindu-Muslim riots in India

What is required is not simply to note that there are not enough intercommunity associations and, therefore, Aligarh is more riot-prone, but to explain why there is not enough inter-community civic engagement during certain periods. What needs to be explained has been used as an explanatory variable. One of the most serious methodological shortcomings of Varshney's study is that it does not look at the social structure of both Hindus and Muslims, and others wherever required, in each city and examine the contradictions and fragmentation on the one hand, and forces of homogenisation and integration, on the other, over a period of time

Contrasting the situations in his 'similar' pair of Aligarh and Calicut cities, Varshney explains the difference between them in the following manner

Why have the politics in Aligarh and Calicut been so different? After 1947, a vicious circle of violence has come into existence in Aligarh there have been few civic links between Hindus and Muslims, and electoral politics has been communally oriented too. In contrast, a virtuous circle of peace exists in Calicut civic links between Hindus and Muslims are robust, and electoral politics, despite the presence of Muslim League, has not ruptured them either Civic life and electoral politics have fed into each other in both cities, in a violent direction in Aligarh, and toward peace in Calicut (2002–150)

One, electoral politics has been communally oriented in Aligarh And, two, civic life and electoral politics have fed into each other Varshney also states that 'Aligarh was among the first cities of the state where the Congress Party lost elections after Independence and among the first where the Hindu nationalists built a solid organisation and electoral presence' (*Ibid* 151) How can he conclude, then, that inter-

community civic engagement constitutes the primary and independent explanatory variable for communal riots? Why is not the nature of electoral politics, which feeds into the civic life, the primary explanatory variable? In fact, the nature of electoral politics, whether it is communally oriented or not, in a particular city needs to be explained too in terms of the history of internal contradictions in its social structure

We see just a hint of such an analysis when Varshney sees a promise in recent changes in Aligarh

As a new middle class among the lower Hindu castes has emerged and the caste-based narrative of politics has spread to Aligarh, a restructuring of politics has become a clear possibility. If caste-based politics does become dominant or hegemonic in the city, it may well undermine the communal institutionalised riot system, and put in place a new civic engagement between Hindus and Muslims (*Ibid*)

This argument clearly demonstrates that civic engagement between Hindus and Muslims depends upon other factors. It is here a consequence of other changes taking place within the social structure, like, for example, the emergence of 'a new middle class among the lower Hindu castes'

On the other hand, Calicut operates in a completely different environment in a state where large-scale movements for social justice and secular political mobilisation have been organised over a long period Varshney himself describes it in the following manner

Kerala's politics continues to be dominated by an ideology of equality and justice, an ideology that coexists with and draws upon a strong caste consciousness. It is a measure of the success of the Communists that in a society in which nearly 70 percent of Hindu population was defined as untouchable and much of it unseeable, the rules of deference have collapsed within a matter of decades. From being the most hierarchical region of India a century ago, Kerala today is the most egalitarian in the country (2002 164)

History of Muslims in Kerala is completely different from that of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh or in Hyderabad of the Deccan Muslims in Kerala were not part of the ruling elite, unlike in Aligarh and Hyderabad The politics of Hindu-Muslim relations, especially since the 1920s, has evolved differently in each region depending upon the nature of internal contradictions in the social structure. The nature of caste and religion based mobilisation in competitive political environment since the 1920s is different in different cities and regions, depending upon their own

peculiar structural conditions. It is these conditions that are necessary to explain the persistence or absence of communal riots in different parts and at different times in India Inter-community and intra-community bonding and associations emerge in a complex way as a consequence of the above processes at work for decades.

Brass (2003: 43-59) describes the social structure in Aligarh in some detail. The broad categories of population, to begin with, are mentioned as Hindu, Muslim, and Scheduled Castes, which assumes that the last category is not Hindu Then, further divisions within each one of these categories are discussed. The most prominent groups seem to be the Banias, especially the Varshneys or Barahsenis, from among the Hindus, Jatavs among the Scheduled Castes, and the baradarı (brotherhood) of Qureshis or Qasais among the Muslims The caste composition of different mohallas or residential areas is discussed More riot-prone mohallas are identified, the significance of their location in the city is explained, and the political affiliation to different parties of different caste categories is discussed. Each of the significant riots in Aligarh since 1961 is then discussed, its location identified in terms of the abovementioned mohallas, and the role of key individuals or organisations in the production of riots discussed From the point view of the riots in Aligarh, Varshneys or Barahseni Banias among the Hindus and Qureshis among the Muslims emerge as the most significant groups

Varshney generally operates with homogenised categories of Hindu and Muslim, though he does mention some caste or categories sometimes. However, it is important to look at the heterogeneity within these categories. One needs to look at the demographic and geographical features of various groups and their differential participation, involvement and victimisation in communal riots. Elizabeth A. Mann (1992) has identified twenty-four distinct Muslim baradaris in Aligarh. As Brass points out, 'Mann has argued for the importance of baradaris, which she characterises as "the core unit of social organisation in the [old] City" and which she claims have persisted as boundary-defining and identity-forming groups that are not necessarily all moving "towards a high Islamic tradition," nor, by implication, therefore, towards an arching Muslim solidarity' (2003. 52). Homogenised categories cannot be taken for granted. The process of homogenisation of categories has to be understood and explained in particular historical and political moments.

Alam focuses on the heterogeneity among Hindu OBCs (Other Backward Classes) and examines the nature of change in various Hindu and Muslim communities in Hyderabad He presents the objectives of his study in the following manner

Overwhelming majority of the people of Hyderabad, as in much of India, live their lives in communities. These communities are still essentially premodern in nature. These communities, under the simultaneous impact of modernisation and the working of democracy, are undergoing dramatic internal changes but without prospects of dissolution as happened in the West under the impact of modernity.

In the context of all this, the idea is to write an account that brings to light, first, how different communities have taken to the life of modern kind, in the last ten years in contrast to earlier times I will look at a number of communities but under the generic terms of OBC and Muslim Secondly, I will try to draw a picture of the changing relations between these two because earlier this had been a basis of historical animosities, now and then leading to communal (sectarian) violence Thirdly, the aim is to see what has been the impact of the above on the communal situation, that is, the politics of inter-community relations (2001)

Alam describes the different caste groups, within the larger category of OBCs, residing in the 'old' city part of Hyderabad where 70 percent of all Muslims of Hyderabad live He mentions groups like Munoor Kapu (the largest social group among Hindus living in the 'old' city), Bhooi, Lodha, Pardi, Gowda or Kallal, Goalis or Yadavs, and Waddar He does not find similar caste-like groups among the Muslims but mentions some small occupational groups like the Dudekula, Durwesh or Fakir, Qureshi, silver-foil makers, bangle makers, etc. The occupational groups exist among the poor and lower-middle-class Muslims, but there are several other distinctive groups, though not necessarily strictly endogamous, among the Muslims in Hyderabad. Some of these are Shias and Sunnis, Khojas and Bohras among 'local' Shias, and then, referring to their place of origin, North African Siddis, Yemenis, Iranis, Arabs, Afghans, Turks, etc. Many of these groups have separate associations. The changing status of such different Muslim groups also needs to be understood.

Alam, through his analysis of changes in the economic and social status of different communities, some of which were closely linked to communal riots, arrives at a conclusion which directly challenges Varshney's formulation of the problem For Alam, these communities have developed stakes in peace despite a low level of inter-community civic engagement

The OBCs and Muslims together do not have a shared space. They live a barricaded social existence. There is very little social give and take between them. But the important thing now is that violence is completely shunned and inter-community peace is actively sought and, further, it is being constantly monitored. This is an entirely new feature in social life and politics of the city (*Ibid*)

Alam is referring to the fact that Hyderabad, 'the riot-prone city', has not experienced any serious rioting since 1991. This is explained in terms of social structural changes in the city. The ideology appealing to most Muslims now is communitarian, as in the case of Kerala Muslims, and not communalist. However, the threat from Hindu nationalists is still present and is pan-Indian in nature unlike the region-specific and local communalism among some Muslims. Therefore, Alam argues that he is suggesting a 'difficulty thesis' and not an 'impossibility thesis' with respect to the potential for communal riots in Hyderabad

Conclusions

Scholarly concern with persistent communal conflict and violence in India, as elsewhere, intensified during the decade of the 1990s and subsequently. Several major studies carried out during the 1990s and earlier have been published recently Similarly, in this context, an intense debate has raged on secularism (see, for example, Bhargava 1998) However it is surprising that sociologists in India have largely ignored this social phenomenon of communal violence, in particular, and studies on minorities, in general, in both teaching and research until very recently Significant contributions have come from political scientists, historians, psychologists and others but there has been limited engagement with this interdisciplinary substantive area by sociologists. There is a need for sociologists in the South Asian region to come together and contribute to the work by the community of scholars from other academic disciplines in this area.

While case studies of 'single sites' of communal violence have continued, there has been a significant shift to comparative studies Comparisons have been made between riot-prone and peaceful cities of similar demographic and other features, between peaceful and riot-prone localities within a single city, and between the peaceful and violent periods within the same city. Attempts are also made to look at the heterogeneity of communities within the broad categories of Hindus and Muslims and the differential impact and involvement of various different communities in communal riots. Such trends have the potential to take forward our understanding of communal conflict and violence

These trends will make it imperative to make the studies more rigorous methodologically However, as mentioned earlier in this paper, rigour is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for better understanding of a social phenomenon Differences in perspectives and concepts like social identity remain important and will continue to shape debates

It was seen in this paper that a diachronic approach is essential to understand communal violence. It allows us to see the possibility of change and avoids the essentialisation of riot-proneness

Substantively, several crucial factors are identified for any study of communal violence. The role of electoral competition and arithmetic of alliances in a democratic polity is important for the timing of ethnic conflicts It is the time of political mobilisation of various ethnic communities In this context, the power of communal representations and discourses has to be recognised. It is important, at the same time, to make a distinction between communitarianism and communalism Some arguments minimise the role of the state in promoting or preventing communal violence However, it can be seen from numerous case studies that state does play a crucial role, in either promoting or preventing communal violence, depending upon the political arithmetic of alliances between communities. It is important to recognise heterogeneity within different communities and examine the implication of different segments in communal riots either as victims or as perpetrators. The relations between different segments need to be examined diachronically to understand the process of change and possibility of peace

Finally, there is need to integrate the studies of communal violence within a broader framework of ethnic conflict. Such a general framework should be able to throw light on why communal conflict is frequent in one city, caste conflict in another, and class conflict in yet another region

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Need for a Paradigm Shift: Environmental Perspective in Sociological Study

Mahbuba Nasreen

Introduction

Although sociology is known as a 'multiple paradigm science', it can be said that its paradigms are alike in their shared anthropocentrism. While some questions remain regarding the exact meaning of a 'paradigm' in sociology, the literature indicates at least two generally accepted attributes First, a paradigm is a set of definable and logically interrelated concepts for examining human society or its institutional parts. That is, a paradigm enables its practitioners to readily structure their analysis in terms of the principal social forces (for example, values, social power and social class) that are assumed to shape the organisation and change of society. A paradigm is, thus, synonymous with a sociological perspective, a way of seeing, or a worldview (Ritzer 1975) Second, paradigms provide a body of knowledge by which scientists interpret and explain events Paradigms are not as rigorously developed and quantifiable as formal theories (Masterman 1970), but they provide the basis for formulating scientific problems and developing research explanations. Based on a non-anthropocentric paradigm, this paper explores the problem of arsenic contamination of groundwater in Bangladesh.

The problem of arsenic contamination of drinking water is comparatively new in Bangladesh The excessive level of arsenic presence in drinking water is redefining water from 'life saver' to a 'threat' to human survival Because it takes ten to twenty years, depending on the amount of arsenic accumulated in the body, to be identified as an arsenic patient, people's response to the disease is not so prompt. In this paper, an attempt has been made to explore the research on how arsenic contamination has been addressed in Bangladesh, and the extent to which arsenic contamination is highlighted from social and environmental perspectives. This paper argues that environment is affected by unwanted physical intrusions into environment, as, for instance, through installation of tube wells. It links environment variables with social variables.

The data for this study were collected from both primary and seconddary sources Primary data came from in-depth case studies of arsenic victims in Charlal and Nilkanda villages of Sonargaon Thana under Narayanganj district Media coverage on arsenic victims and research

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reports and articles on arsenic contamination were secondary source of information.

Defining Paradigms of Environment

William Catton and Riley Dunlap (1978) have classified paradigms of environment under two types. 'Human Exceptional Paradigm' (HEP) and 'New Environmental Paradigm' (NEP) According to HEL, 'humans are unique among the earth's creatures, for they have culture', on the other hand, NEP emphasises 'human beings are but one species among the many that are independently involved in the biotic communities that shape our social life' Although there are no controversial theories regarding the relationship between society and environment, different perspectives have emerged and are still emerging as a result of environmental degradation. Sociologists dealing with the environment are concerned about the causes, consequences and the impact of several environmental issues such as air and water pollution, resource depletion and scarcity, and unsustainable development

Despite the polarity among environmental sociologists, they do share some assumptions about nature and society, and how society is related to its physical or biotic environment. Because of a shift in the paradigm in recent decades and the emergence of new perspectives, they now argue that the social system has significant interaction with the physical or biotic environments Most environmental sociologists assume that economic growth is not necessarily good. While they share some common assumptions with mainstream sociological paradigms, there are also some major differences in the paradigms within environmental sociology. These differences can be grasped through the notion of the new environmental paradigm

Arsenic Contamination of Groundwater

In 1992, the School of Environmental Studies (SOES), Jadavpur University (Kolkata), made a surprising discovery A Bangladeshi woman, who had settled in West Bengal after marriage, was identified to have arsenical skin lesions. The SOES researchers hypothesised that arsenic contamination of groundwater also existed across the border in Bangladesh. While interviewed, the woman reported that many of her relatives and neighbours in Bangladesh exhibited similar skin lesions. The SOES researchers published their findings in 1993, and began to analyse hair, skin, nail and urine samples of the growing number of people coming from Bangladesh to Kolkata for treatment. It was concluded by the re-

searchers that, as in West Bengal, groundwater in Bangladesh too, is contaminated by excessive level of arsenic (Patel 2001). However, the Government of Bangladesh did not recognise the arsenic contamination until the local researchers and scientists identified patients with arsenicosis.

At present, more than eighty million people in Bangladesh (that is, about two-thirds of her population) are at risk of arsenicosis. Of these, only two million are identified with arsenic symptoms and the rest are not exposed yet, as it takes ten to twenty years, depending on the amount of arsenic accumulated in the body, to be identified as an arsenic patient. The vast majority of the rural people are inextricably linked with the contaminated water for their daily survival. Most of these people know nothing about arsenic contamination, nor do they anticipate the impending arsenicosis catastrophe. It must be mentioned here that, according to World Health Organisation, the safe level of arsenic content in drinking water is 0.01 milligram per litre. However, the Department of Environment of the Government of Bangladesh has suggested that the accepted amount of arsenic in drinking water is 0.05 milligram per litre.

Causes of Arsenic Contamination

A number of theories have been propounded about the causes of arsenic contamination in groundwater Arsenic is naturally present in the environment in air, water and earth, with the highest concentration of arsenic beneath the earth's surface. Arsenic originates inside the earth, and it is then transported upward to the air, water and surface by various natural and anthropogenic processes Natural processes include volcanic activity, weathering, and biological activity. Anthropogenic sources of arsenic are geothermal power plants, fossil-fuel combustion, smelting, mining, and groundwater pumping In Bangladesh, as in West Bengal, naturally occurring arsenic has been found in groundwater aquifers

The aquifers of Bangladesh were created slowly over time as rivers carried sediments to the Bengal Basin. The sediments in any particular aquifer vary and, consequently, contribute differing levels of arsenic to the groundwater. As sediments (some containing high levels of arsenic and others containing no arsenic) filled the Bengal Basin, arseniferous aquifers could have been cut off from adjacent non-arseniferous aquifers. This 'meander belt theory' could account for the drastic differences often found in neighbouring tube wells. The sporadic nature of arsenic contamination makes estimating risk of arsenic poisoning very difficult and subject to error (*Ibid*)

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Different human activities such as the use of chemicals fertilizers, pesticides in agriculture, burning of fossil fuel, and other causes have attracted attention. However, excessive withdrawal of groundwater by tube wells and hand pumps have been identified as other major causes of arsenic contamination by researchers (Nasreen 2002).

Mitigation Programmes on Arsenic Disaster

A considerable number of projects and policies have addressed specific issues relating to arsenic problems. Dhaka Community Hospital and School of Environmental Studies of Jadavpur University (Kolkata) jointly conducted a countrywide study on arsenic pollution. Many other government and non-government organisations such as UNICEF, WHO, ICDDRB, DPHE, BUET, BSMMU, ADAB, BRAC, BCAS, Disaster Forum, Grameen Trust, and many more are involved in identifying the contamination of groundwater, and the causes of and remedies for contamination. Arsenicosis, resulting from intake of contaminated drinking water, is also a subject matter for study by many of these organisations. Donors are pouring funds over numerous projects to obtain a solution to the problem. These projects are making significant contribution to the study of arsenic contamination in general, but lack of collaboration among different organisations is working as a barrier for them to brave the catastrophe.

Arsenic mitigation programmes include raising awareness among people, identifying contaminated tube wells and affected patients, and implementation of short-term and long-term mitigation technologies. However, none of the mitigation programmes has reached its goals. It is evident that people are not made properly aware about safe drinking water or avoiding drinking contaminated water. People living in the geographically disadvantaged areas such as in *haor* or in the *char* land are compelled to drink arsenic contaminated water. The Department of Public Health and Engineering, the sole government organisation concerned with the drinking water issue, is screening tube wells and identifying those contaminated with arsenic by a red mark on their neck. However, it does not provide people with arsenic-free tube wells or means to get safe drinking water. Under such circumstances, though aware, people are forced to drink the contaminated water. Moreover, measuring technology for testing of water is also scant, and often expensive

Victims of arsenicosis were also screened by several organisations, but on a limited scale Identification of patient often becomes very difficult not only for economic and resource constraints, but also for social reasons, as people do not want to disclose their disease. The

treatment of arsenicosis victims is not only unavailable, but also very expensive for many of the poor.

In Bangladesh, many arsenic-filtering technologies such as the three-kolshi filter and safi filter have been designed to filter or absorb arsenic from tube-well water. These technologies do not solve the problem of disposing of arsenic-contaminated sludge. Sinking of tube wells in arsenic-free aquifers is also a contentious issue. Deep tube-wells were also provided to many of the organisations, technology of which is not women friendly. Use of dug well, surface water and rainwater resources are also suggested as comparatively safer arsenic-mitigation options. However, people do not have an appropriate technology which may help them to mitigate the problems of arsenic contamination for long.

Government has launched a comprehensive programme to provide people safe water in the arsenic-prone areas. The options are as follows sinking of deep tube-wells, re-excavation of wells, digging new wells and installation of a locally developed technology, namely, 'pond-sand-filter'. The programme is supported by the World Bank and funds are allocated to the Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project (BAMWSP) to launch the programme Although about \$ 43.9 million have already been spent by the government, a large number of people still do not have access to safe drinking water. It is reported that less than 23 percent of the money allocated to BAMWSP could not be utilised due to bureaucratic tangles, mismanagement and corruption (*The Daily Star*, 22 January 2003) Moreover, the options for mitigation are controversial because many researchers are strongly against installation of deep tube-wells

Social and Cultural Impact of Arsenicosis

Although arsenic contamination is getting enough attention, scientific research on arsenicosis is scanty in Bangladesh Government and other agencies are mainly attentive to the identification, mitigation and supply of safe drinking water, but little has been done to discover the pains the arsenic patients are going through Some organisations are identifying arsenic patients, but almost nothing has been done for their rehabilitation Because arsenicosis is related to health hazards, scientists, especially medical researchers, are dominating the field. There is almost no research on the socio-cultural or economic aspects of arsenic contamination or impact of arsenicosis on society. This paper is an attempt to highlight some of the adverse impacts of arsenicosis with which people have to live with as victims.

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The social fallout of arsenicosis is enormous Arsenic contamination is not only a physical but also a social phenomenon. High consumption of arsenic-contaminated water makes people victims of arsenicosis. In affected areas, people are forced to drink contaminated water in the absence of alternative source. Some of the social consequences of arsenicosis are discussed below.

Social Instability

Arsenic is giving birth to extreme instability in the social life of Bangladesh. In many areas, people are puzzled to get arsenic-free drinking water. People are becoming dispirited without having proper treatment. A chaotic environment is prevailing due to peoples' ignorance of what is arsenic contamination or why they are getting sick by drinking water from tube wells. The problem of arsenicosis is hampering the socialisation of children. The fear of becoming a victim of arsenicosis is also working as a barrier to proper physical and psychological development of children. Arsenicosis is producing social stigmatisation and discrimination. Social conflict over contaminated water is contributing towards destroying social harmony and network relationships

Superstition

People in remote villages are not familiar with arsenic pollution, they are not informed about arsenicosis. As a result of ignorance, superstitions, prejudices and fairy tales are constructed about arsenic patients. People stay away from arsenic victims, or become scared of them due to such superstitions. Some think of it as an act of devil or 'impure air', and keep themselves and their family members away from arsenic patients. Because of such prejudices, many arsenicosis patients in remote villages are having miserable life. In Kushtia, arsenicosis is considered as a 'curse of Allah' or the work of evil spirits (DCHT 1998, *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka 11 September 2000)

Ostracism

Arsenicosis patients are often identified as lepers, and are ostracised (Das et al. 1994, Das 1995, DCHT 1998). Children of arsenicosis patients are not allowed to attend social and religious functions. They are denied water from neighbour's tube wells.

The victims are abandoned not only by the wider society, but also by their family members. Women are the worst victims of ostracism They

are doubly vulnerable by the disease itself and by becoming excommunicated Due to their socio-cultural position, women abandoned by husbands and families live sub-humanly However, there are also instances of wives of arsenicosis husbands leaving them temporarily

Diminished Working Ability

Arsenicosis kills people gradually The development of dark spots on the skin is the early symptom of arsenicosis, which gradually turns into nodules. Over time, these symptoms can become more pronounced depending on a person's exposure to water containing arsenic. Limbs can be affected by gangrene, and internal organs, including the liver, kidneys and lungs can be affected, and, in extreme cases, cancer can occur in skin and internal organs. The victims gradually become crippled and incapable of doing hard labour.

Marriage-related Problems

It is evident that people are reluctant to establish marital relationships with families having arsenicosis patients (BCAS 1997, DCHT 1998, New York Times 10 November 1998, Sarkar 1999) Such incidents cause unlimited anxiety for parents of unmarried adult children Arsenicosis victims are not able to find spouse Young women and men are advised to remain unmarried Like other problems, divorce is also prevalent among arsenicosis victims Arsenicosis is a cause for divorce in different parts of the country (BCAS 1997; DCHT 1998)

Increase in Poverty

Arsenicosis is more prevalent among the poor, who are constrained to take contaminated tube-well water Dietary deficiency can compound the toxicity of an element (Harding-Barlow 1983) Researchers have also reported that chronic arsenic poisoning is related to the nutritional status of the individuals (Biswas et al 1998) It is evident that most of the people affected by arsenicosis are extremely poor (Dhar et al 1997, Biswas et al 1998, NEAB 1999) Lack of finance to get treatment for arsenicosis further deteriorates the condition of arsenicosis victims Spending huge money for treating arsenicosis is increasing the economic burden of the poor

The poor victims become incapable of hard labour, which results in increasing poverty and continuous ill health. This is further compounded by social attitudes Unfortunately, the victims are treated as untouchables

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and they lose their jobs Arsenicosis acts as a barrier to employment (Sarkar 1999) and, thus, arsenicosis victims cannot contribute towards economic development of the country

Impact on women

Poverty is gendered in a gendered economy and culture. Women in Bangladesh have to take the main responsibility to perform the domestic chores like cooking, cleaning, feeding children and animals, and women play a key role in fetching water. Women share the knowledge of water quality while carrying water. Arsenic in tube wells often force women to walk several kilometres to get arsenic-free water. They become burdened with additional responsibilities, which often force them to compromise with the cultural ideology of *parda* (veil). It should also be mentioned here that to cope with the crises of arsenicosis, women often play the key role not only through carrying arsenic-free drinking water but also through providing nutritious food to victims by using up their savings, selling their assets, and drawing upon network relationships.

Death

The 'International Conference on Arsenic in Bangladesh Groundwater World's Greatest Arsenic Calamity' held on 27-28 February 1999 in USA was dedicated to Pinjira Begum of Miapur of Chargahta village in Rajshahi district, who died of arsenicosis The joint report of SOES and DCH mentioned many such deaths of arsenic patients in Mymensingh, Pabna, Chandpur, and Lakxhmipur districts The Gopalganj correspondent of *The Bangladesh Observer* (Dhaka: 12 March 2000) reported the death of five of Tepakhola as a result of arsenicosis

Conclusion

This paper is an attempt to highlight the realities faced by some people in Bangladesh due to arsenic contamination in groundwater. One of the objectives of the paper was to emphasise the fact that multiplicity of paradigms in sociology have great significance for an environmental sociologist. Arsenic contamination of groundwater in Bangladesh is a problem related to environmental degradation and is affecting millions of her people. Government and other organisations give attention to identification of contaminated tube well and in mitigation instead of focusing on people's miseries. There is a need for timely and focused policy to solve arsenicosis-related problems. Educating people about the mis-

conception that arsenicosis is contagious should be given priority. Sensitisation of the community and the law-enforcement authority to prevent separation and ostracism is also necessary

Attempts should be made to grasp the different issues relating to arsenicosis patients, such as their problems of coping with wounds, gender-based differential impact on victims, etc. Women are the major victims of arsenicosis due to their lower status. Therefore, attention should be given to special groups such as women and children. The government and non-government organisations, and the media and local community should work hand-in-hand. Community-based mitigation work should also be carried out. Monitoring activities to visualise transparency and accountability are equally important for the sustainability of any programme. In order to overcome socioeconomic crises, psychological support and employment opportunities should be provided to patients. As water bodies are linked with neighbouring countries, regional co-operation should given special attention. Programmes on arsenicosis will be most effective if strong policy support and guidance back them.

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Sociology of Christianity, Conversion and Secularism in India: Some Reflections

Rowena Robinson

It has been my contention for some time now that Indian sociology has much more to gain, theoretically, by comparing its own experiences with those of countries just beyond its backyard so to speak, rather than pitching itself in isolation against a somewhat mythical construct called the 'West'. In this paper, I will draw to a considerable extent on my own research and that of several other scholars, some of whom I have worked with closely at different points of time Several themes are approached. Christianity, conversion and secularism, for instance The title of this section of the workshop invited us to ponder the scope for indigenous intervention in the construction of theoretical models in sociology Some considerations need to be made apparent at the commencement of this journey For the most part, I retain the view that sociological concepts should remain general, even while they encourage rather than suppress distinctiveness. The struggle between the wide-ranging and the specific has been a long one and it will not be won by veering too much towards either extreme The tension itself, rather than its nice resolution, gives the enterprise of sociology its exciting, exacting edge. It is in provoking the question and not settling it, that practice thrives

There are several ways in which one may pose or address the question implicit in the theme of this section. Whatever the mode selected, we may not forget that translation lies at the heart of the anthropological exercise. To renounce it would kill the anthropological project. The particularity, though not necessarily the uniqueness of cultures, is not contestable; our question should relate to their inscription. Too many of our concepts have come from Europe, and the specificities of its history have been endowed with a universality they do not inherently possess. This does not mean, however, that we should not deconstruct or re-work what we receive or that we cannot include concepts from wherever they emerge. However, whether home-grown or unfamiliar, the ways in which we inscribe cultures must permit of the promise of intelligibility and the possibility of comparison

There is an area where the discussion regarding the 'foreignness' of concepts becomes even more urgent, if at times a tad high-pitched. This is where concepts have entered not just into academic but also into

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political deliberations, where they are not mere ponderings but also policy. We need to step that much more carefully on this terrain, for what we believe could have implications for large groups and over time. More specifically, in my area of research, avoiding 'foreign' concepts is particularly awkward. The groups being studied grapple with ideas of conversion or secularism, theological notions or differing concepts of sacred in their lives and in their worlds. The stuff of these collisions constitutes our labour. On this terrain, the space for the concept indigenous may not be discretely drawn. It is the battleground itself we are contending with, there is no getting away from dirtying the hands

Christianity

One of my first experiments was with writing an anthropological introduction to Indian Christianity Some of my discomfort, shared with other colleagues and friends, rose from that fact that till very recently writing on the subject suffered from enormous disregard I tried to trace this disregard through an understanding of the historical roots of disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and history and the pattern of their development in India As I showed, the Dumontian perspective in sociology and anthropology, and which dominated the study of Hinduism for so long, gave centrality to an upper-caste, essentialised version of Hinduism and treated it as synonymous with India The study of India was, therefore, and has been, for a long time, the study of Hindu India This notion led both to the reification of Hinduism and the marginalisation and neglect of non-Hindu groups and communities.

It needs no reiteration that sociology and anthropology came to India from outside In this context, it is useful to look at some of the literature that has begun to look critically at the anthropological work done in India, particularly during the colonial period, by European scholars One of the dominant and best-known paradigms that Orientalist knowledge generated was the Aryan theory. The work of an entire body of Indological scholars and administrators came together in the construction of the racial understanding of Indian civilisation that was established with the Aryan theory. Ancient Indian textual evidence was sought to support the theory the *Rig-Veda* was referred to constantly. According to the myth, Indian history was said to have its roots or its point of origin in the conquest of the *dasa*s by the Aryas. The Aryas came with their superior language (Sanskrit) and culture and they dominated the rest of Indian history

Dravidians, too, came to be defined by a merging of the markers of language and race. Thus came the idea that Dravidian speakers were an

indigenous race and their subjugation by the Aryans created India's most distinctive, unique and defining institution – that which sets it apart from the British and by extension the West – caste Can one not see here roots of ideas that were to find their way later into a mature, full-blown scientific structural discourse on the radical difference between India and the West, the distinction between homo hierarchicus and homo equalis in Dumont?

Projected onto this set of ideas was another set by which a link was established between race, language and nation. In the context of the emergence of nation-states in the course of the nineteenth century, this became a critical concept, and language and race came to be seen as vital elements of national identity. The link was vital to the task of differentiating the indigenes from the foreigners, the rightful owner/inheritors of the land from the mere arriviste, the parvenu, so to speak. This theory has had enormous implications for India's political history.

Indological and administrative discourses ran parallel and merged very substantively at times. Though linguistics managed to prove the 'kinship' of Europeans and Indians through the Aryan theory, once incorporated into colonial administrative discourses, this became the kinship of the unequal. The right to rule and the legitimacy of the Empire could only be defended by such a hierarchical model. The discovery of the pre-Vedic Indus Valley Civilisation did little to dislodge the Aryan theory. The people of the Indus Valley Civilisation were sometimes treated as non-Aryans who were conquered (as were the Dravidians) by the Aryans Otherwise, attempts were made to redefine the Indus Valley Civilisation as an Aryan civilisation!

Other strands were interwoven to consolidate the myth. It was not long before the Aryans came to be regarded as specific people, a race or ethnic group set apart by their use of Sanskrit and its accompanying culture. It would appear clear, though, that historical and linguistic evidence points to the imported roots of Sanskrit and even if an invasion by Aryans were to remain unproved, certainly the language had to be brought by a migrant people. However, and this cannot be stressed enough, this does not mean that they had to be a distinct race or ethnic group. The Aryans were migrant people, probably many diverse groups. The idea that they were a single, pure race remains a myth that historical evidence does not support.

Hindutva ideology may not necessarily insist upon the racial integrity of the Hindu Arya However, there is always a need to stress on ethnic identity. This assertion of an indigenous Aryan identity forms the root of the notion that only the Hindu Arya is indigenous to India Christians, like Muslims, are alien, since they cannot prove that India is

either their punyabhumi (sacred territory) or their pitrbhumi (land of their ancestors). This view confounds biological descent and conversion to another religion (from outside India) and bases itself on the absurd assertion of straight biological descent from the people of early times. It disregards entirely the fact that Christians or Muslims lay rightful claim to Indian ancestry

Once the Hindu Arya has been given an indigenous ancestry, it is but a short step from there to claim that the Indian territory and, by conflation, the Indian nation, belongs as a right to the descendants of the Aryans When even the Indus Valley Civilisation is equated with the people of the Vedic corpus, the Hindu Arya is endowed with an unbroken lineal ancestry going back several millennia, and the Vedic corpus re-emerges as the foundation of Indian civilisation conveniently (Thapar 1997 xv) These ideas recur in different places One variation on the theme, which has now become the commonplace of Indian political and public discourse, can be traced in the idea of the powerful, synthesismg Indic civilisation which has taken in and assimilated 'foreign' elements at various times without giving up its own 'essence' Within this framework, it is easy to collapse Indian philosophy with Vedic/Hindu/Aryan/Brahmanic philosophy and then to argue that this culture forms the basis of Indian civilisation

India has become a civilisation synthesised by Hinduism and, critically, by caste. Once this synthesis between the ancient and the modern is woven around the idea of 'the caste Hindu', little historical support or exploration is considered necessary. Hinduism emerges full-blown and complete, transcending time, capturing space, suppressing difference and variation. The modern anthropological and sociological discourse on religion in India had another godhead and trajectory different from Indological and administrative writing. Yet somewhere along the way, the links with colonial administrative and Indological frameworks took place empirically and theoretically.

One may like to discern in the early structural-functional approach and the folk-civilisation continuum model used in the study of religion the merging of anthropological and Indological traditions. Thus, one had the 'great' and the 'little' traditions, the 'civilisational' and the 'folk', the 'universal' and the 'parochial'. The overarching frame appears to have been provided by some attempt to search for the unity of the 'East', as it were, or the principle by which the entire civilisation was structured and the logic according to which it functioned. Indology provided that principle in the pairing of caste and Hinduism. Caste became the major link bonding the little field studies with the textual models, even the centrality that the village community got in the studies of the 1950s.

linked the village to the 'great' Sanskritic tradition India was Hindu, Hinduism was caste and despite the fact that Aryans are brothers and the British and Indians, therefore, mythical patrilateral cousins, 'the East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet'. Homo hierarchicus stands in unique contrast and, indeed, opposition to Homo equalis

It is clearly very difficult to understand Christianity or Islam in this model Where was the great 'Indian' tradition to which these could be linked? The difficulty of absorbing everything into the great 'civilisational' model, though, showed up in the cracks. Some things refused to be easily assimilated dalits and tribes among them Again, the India versus the West debate that Dumont launched opposed the two without any hope or possibility of comparative study A historicised and grounded approach to the study of religion did not obviously develop because India was the static land of religion, where the play of power and the dynamics of change were immaterial A living culture is thus rendered still. No sense emerges of the development of religious faith or practice.

The way in which non-Hindu communities were brought within the boundaries of study was by viewing them though the lens of caste, that essence of Indian social structure. So, we have studies framed by the question is there easte in non-Hindu communities? Certain forms of ritual such as life-crisis rituals, for instance, came in for a good deal of attention because they could be captured through the conceptual category of 'syncretism'. Thus, the tools for the analysis of non-Hindu communities have been insufficiently developed to take account of the complexity of issues relating to the practise of religion in India. View, for example, the inadequacy of the sociology of the relation between text and practice. One of the problematics in the study of Christianity or Islam in India became that of seeing the variation between text and practice, but the text was seen here as something that was in no need of definition It was static and ahistorical like Hindu texts but also, here, universal. An elite and priestly understanding of the text was privileged All everyday practices of Christians and Muslims that did not fit the universal textual tradition were viewed as deviant. The framework of the ideal versus the deviant dominated the studies for a long time.

Many practices were not even seen as worthy of attention, because they were viewed as being the same everywhere, universally and, therefore, not exotic enough to be considered worthy of anthropological interest. The services in the church for Christianity for instance, the sermon or the idea of prayer, all suffer from mattention due to this understanding. The specific expression that a particular idea or set of texts from the classical tradition was given in a definite historical context and circumstance, the shifts that that expression took over time and the

critical relation of these to questions of identity, and the contests over identity definition between different groups have not received the attention that they deserve.

What is my answer to the difficulties encountered in the approaches? How may we think of resolving these? To suggest some possibilities, concepts such as 'fest' (feast) or 'Maataa' (Mother Mary) used by some Christians, could be taken up for analysis These are 'indigenous' concepts and partake simultaneously of 'local' and 'classical' traditions Such concepts rarely mimic, in a simple fashion, classical or textual traditions. Rather, they play with the latter, add to them perhaps, select from them, redefine and reconfigure them to fit their own social and historical circumstances. We could understand these transformations and the agency and contextuality they involve.

It is interesting, though perhaps not inexplicable, that interest in many minority groups in India – Muslims, Christians, Sikhs – has developed in relation to their importance vis-à-vis Hindu society, usually due to conflict. Hence, studies of Muslims mostly figured in the area of politics, Partition and communalism Studies on Sikhism emerged prominently in the context of the politics of identity in Punjab Christianity has been viewed through the lens of conversion (from Hinduism) as Sikhism and Islam were viewed through the lens of communalism or fundamentalism (in opposition to Hinduism)

These trends in the study of religion in India have led to problems in the understanding of the interaction between the different religious streams and in the development of concepts to discuss such interaction. The terms 'syncretism' and 'composite culture', which, as has been suggested, have been freely employed have their limitations and assumptions. They typically view the interaction between different religious streams and traditions as being an essentially harmonic, non-conflictual one. In fact, they are also imbued with an essentialist view of religion. They locate religion firmly within a notion of culture typically secure from the mediation of troubling questions of control or conflict. By viewing religion as a closed, self-contained corpus of ideas, such concepts are unable to incorporate the correlation or connections between religion, social and material processes and relationships of power and hierarchy.

While teasing out some of the implications of the concept of syncretism, it may also be possible to delineate a way out of its limitations. Kalpana Ram (1991) has dealt with some of these issues. While most Christian communities live in worlds permeated with 'Hindu' norms and ideas, as Ram has argued, it is facile to view the retention of Hindu elements among Christian groups as a sign of the lack of authenticity of

their faith or to assume that converts always have an easy and harmonious ('syncretic') relationship with all strands of Hinduism Furthermore, we can bring a much greater degree of complexity into our understanding of the 'inter-relationship' between communities In an analysis of these inter-relations and interactions, what is being taken and/or exchanged needs to be historicised. We can begin to historicise popular religion and ground it in regional, spatial and temporal realities

Conversion

Conversion is a fraught issue Many scholars suggest that the term itself should be discarded I took the position, while editing *Religious Conversion in India* (see Robinson and Clarke 2003), that, rather than throw out the concept, we could throw it *open*, examine what 'conversion' means or meant in different religious contexts and at different periods of time, compare and contrast modes and motivations in conversion. Could we speak of conversion to traditions other than Islam and Christianity, with which the term is most popularly associated? What was the nature of such conversion? How would the incorporation of a range of possibilities within the framework of conversion change the way we look at the term? The point of the exploration was not to define conversion once and for all or to limit its terms narrowly but to quarrel with the term, debate about it, turn it upside down and play with it, raise questions and query received ideas and theories

For some scholars, conversion is comprehended when spoken of in relation to Islam or Christianity but seen as irrelevant in the context of South Asian religions, particularly Hinduism or even Sikhism. It appeared best, therefore, to demarcate 'conversion' as shaped by the historical experiences and meaning systems of Islam or, even more significantly, Christianity, from conversion which may then be employed as a neutral sociological term to understand change of religion, beliefs and practices By doing so, several possibilities unfold and, perhaps, some pitfalls may be circumvented For instance, the hyper-distinctiveness, if one may so coin a phrase, of conversion to Islam or Christianity ('conversion') seems to revolve around the notion of 'exclusivity'. Christianity, like Islam, seemingly demands of its neophytes that they take on the new religion and, in the same moment, abandon and renounce completely all elements of the old

A closer reading of historical materials reveals that in practise the extent to which 'exclusivity' has been either insisted on or achieved has varied enormously under different conditions. These accommodations did not always occur against the will of the missionaries or without their

knowledge. What the boundaries of the renounced tradition are is itself by no means an unambiguous question and has been answered differently by different denominations at different periods of time. Often, political configurations were critical in defining boundaries. Battles raged in Indian Christian theology in the nineteenth century about whether the distinctions of caste were 'religious' manifestations or purely 'social' and 'cultural' ones (Forrester 1980) Catholic missionaries had one answer, various Protestants denominations had other answers and different social groups of converts yet other

Moreover, we are aware that certain historical periods have seen the rise of the pursuit of exclusion and the struggle to delineate boundaries tightly among traditions, which did not always subscribe to these notions Varieties of influences have played a role in contributing to such transformations. Various scholars have examined these shifts in the context of contemporary Hindusm and even Sikhism So, we were able to imagine conversion as a fluid process of changing affiliations of religious beliefs and traditions with a range of possibilities. It became feasible to compare and, importantly, contrast in one broad framework the shifting sectarian affiliations within Hinduism as well as 'conversion' to Islam or Catholicism 'Conversion' in the sense specified here, then, was part of a spectrum of possibilities that ranged from the more or less non-exclusive to the rigidly exclusive These possibilities might manifest themselves in different religious traditions or broadly within the same religious tradition at different moments of time. The modern Sikhism of the Khalsa is more resolutely exclusive in its orientation than other, earlier and more flexible forms of 'Sıkh identification.

Again, it becomes possible to render how conversion might be one halt along the path towards possible 'conversion' to a more exclusive faith David Hardiman (2003) recorded that Bhil tribals converted to an 'alternative system of ethics' involving faith in Sanskritic deities, and the reform of their lives along more austere lines were considered ripe for 'conversion' to Christianity by missionaries in the late nineteenth century. The shedding of the habit of drinking and the practise of violence or thieving, stereotypically associated with Bhil life, made the missionaries believe that the Bhils were ready to accept an ethically even more 'advanced' form of religious belief, namely Christianity.

Some religious traditions are said to be 'proselytising' or evangelising by character, intrinsic to their system of beliefs is the desire and need to bring the unbeliever into the fold. Others expand by natural reproduction and are, often, opposed to the bringing of converts into the community through a process of active proselytism. Again, Islam and Christianity stand on one side of the divide, Hinduism or Sikhism on the

other Indeed, some scholars include Judaism along with Christianity The problematic and unsatisfactory character of such conclusions emerges against the complexity and nuance captured by the historical record.

Judaism may be a monotheistic faith with rigidly drawn boundaries, but it has not evangelised or actively sought converts through most of its history. Syrian Christianity in Kerala in India reproduced itself by birth and proselytism in the name of the faith was virtually unheard of until the nineteenth century brought about radical shifts in the politico-economic and social environment in which the members of the community lived Richard Eaton has made a powerful argument that Mughal rulers in Bengal in the late sixteenth century maintained a hands-off policy with regard to religious matters and refused to promote the conversion of Bengalis to Islam. Islamic Mughal ashrafs developed a form of religious piety in north India that was distinctive in at least three aspects 'their special link with the pan-Indian Chishti order, their conceptual separation of religion and state, and, as a corollary to this, their disinclination to convert Bengalis to Islam' (1997) 174-5)

On the other hand, Kunj Behari Singh (1963. 67) has recorded the spread of Vaishnavism along with ideas about caste among the Meiteis of Manipur from the eighteenth century onwards. The process was during one particular phase accompanied by the destruction of many rare Meitei manuscripts and *puranas* because their presence was viewed as a barrier to the spread of the new faith. Again, modern Hinduism has made an attempt to define itself as a faith that can attract converts. Internet sites describing Hinduism today speak the language of mission and talk of creating a global community. In such sites, Hinduism is depicted along the lines of Christianity or Islam. It is defined as having canonical rituals, with precepts and obligations like Islam, with sacraments like Christianity and with a conversion strategy that models itself on both (see Robinson 2001)

I felt that our understanding of the processes of conversion should be broad enough to capture such variations across time and complexities across denomination and region. There did not seem to be a good enough reason to abandon the term conversion, for there are few others to replace it without difficulty. Restricting it only for use in relation to one or other religious tradition has its own problems, some of which I have already delineated in the preceding paragraphs. It appeared much more exciting and relevant to speak of a range of situations and meanings that are a part of the field of conversion, with 'conversion' requiring a proper initiation ritual, exclusive adherence to a set of dogmas and abandonment

of all other beliefs and practices being only one possibility and, perhaps, lying at one extreme.

It is not that attempts have not been made to dispense with the concept of conversion, particularly in the Indian context Specifically, the concept of 'sanskritisation', as Hardiman (2003) shows was, in the post-Independence period, adopted to describe the process of spiritual and social reform witnessed among tribal groups and low castes Sanskritisation was the process by which certain castes and tribes that were low in the ritual hierarchy attempted to improve their status by emulating the rituals, values and practices of the higher castes. However, the formulation has some of the same difficulties that accompanied other, previous attempts to capture this kind of socio-religious change such as 'assimilation' and 'Hinduisation'

'Assimilation' is a term far too loose and imprecise to be of any theoretical and analytical value. Assimilation must occur across all conversion movements, it is the degree and extent that varies and it is the mode of assimilation that merits closer analysis. Is the idea of assimilation permitted from above, or appropriated from below? 'Hinduisation' tells us little of what is converted to, sectarian differences may be of considerable significance. In any case, 'assimilation', 'Hinduisation' and 'sanskritisation' are all palpably unable to grapple with the elements of resistance and challenge contained in such movements

Others have argued that a perception of conversion confined to the idea of radical religious rupture associated with the theoretical understanding of Islam or Christianity necessarily leaves analytically unexplored such shifts as the multiple transformations of caste and sect observed in Indian society (Dube and Dube 2003). We need to work with and on the expressions of novelty and the modes of dissention and defiance contained in but not necessarily consumed by protest movements of this sort. Hardiman further viewed socio-religious movements among tribals and low castes as 'forms of self-assertion that followed a logic that was determined by the people themselves. There was no straightforward imitation of high caste values, rather, a synthesis was created from an eclectic appropriation of various elements of the cultures and beliefs of the politically dominant classes' (2003 256)

Indeed, far from supporting these movements, the high castes often opposed and attempted to suppress them Such movements clearly involved affiliation or conversion to a different system of ethics and rejection of some existing religious and cultural practices. They manifestly create something new, rather than merely mimic something already available. The novelty so fashioned and the ways in which it plays with the past as it configures the present is all up for analytical

grabs The movements, Hardiman points out, brought their followers into conflict with kin and neighbours, creating social tensions on par with those generally associated with a shift in allegiance to Christianity or Islam A fruitful understanding of conversion must be able to accommodate all modes of appropriation of alternative religious beliefs and practices, including appropriations produced as strategies of defiance and insubordination.

Many may disagree with the formulations of these paragraphs However, it does appear that an understanding of conversion that steers clear both of an inevitable association of the term with a specific set of traditions and of unconditional renunciation of the possibilities of its use in other contexts offers greater analytical flexibility. It is also theoretically more profuse, for it refuses to perpetuate worn formulations and received rigidities Critically, it is informed by an appreciation of the politics of conversion and the power-dynamics of shifting religious identities

Bringing together on the same ground multiple contexts – ancient Jain and Buddhist conversions, conversion to varied varieties of Islam or Christianity or even Sikhism at different points of time and through differing modes and motivations as well as tribal conversions and transformations of sect and caste – was not a yoking of a series of incompatibles. What the juxtaposition significantly did was to accent conjuncture and connection, while making us aware of discord and divergence

Secularism

The final theme that I will discuss here is that of secularism My treatment of the subject made in several papers – some published and some not – remains consistent with the kind of engagements that I have pursued in other areas. For the following reasons, I make a case that getting rid of the term will not resolve our concerns. Secularism is now part of our political and popular discourses, we have to contend with it. The idea of the secular as I shall attempt to maintain is intrinsically connected with that of democracy, moreover, ours is not the only country struggling with the concept or its implications. It is the refuge of the marginalised, those within and beyond the pale of 'communities' for whom the only guarantor of freedom and equality is the state. All countries, whether in the West or the East, grapple with secularism – to none has its embrace come without tussle, this lack of ease is not necessarily a sign of failure or a reason for dismissal of the concept.

In line with this mode of argument, I find it meaningless to enter into a discussion of the 'foreign' origins of the concept of secularism

Clearly, secularism is 'from outside', just as is democracy, nationalism, socialism or even the 'welfare state' It is, like democracy in the sense enshrined in the Indian Constitution, a concept that we have received partly through our interaction with certain western discourses. What I find important to recollect is that India is not unique in its adoption of the secular. Analysts of secularism and the role of the state in relation to religion in India have tended to compare the experience of that country directly with that of the 'West' ignoring the ways in which other complex, traditional cultures in Asia have mediated the political realities of multi-religious societies in the modern period. This has also bolstered the stand taken by right-wing Hindu parties that 'secularism' is essentially a western, 'Christian' notion not suited for India. They contend that 'Islamic' societies are exclusivist and argue that 'Hindu India', as it were, needs to give up its soft secularism and adopt a harder line in relation to its religio-ethnic minorities.

In a paper on India and Malaysia, therefore, I tried to argue that that country's experiences and struggles with the principle of secularism may hold valuable lessons for us at the level of theory and policy. Malaysia, like India, is a complex, plural society and an established liberal democracy Recent years have seen the rise of fundamentalism in both democracies, however. Islamic in Malaysia and Hindu in India. We need to understand how an Islamic majority country defends secularism in its political discourses as well as the reasons for the current rise in fundamentalism. The answers may throw light on the shaping of political structures in India since independence and on the bewildering rise of Hindu fundamentalism. It may also offer ways through which the Hindu 'savaging' of secularism may be countered — by showing its operation in a non-Christian, non-western complex Asian tradition

It may be considered something of an irony that Hindu nationalists of today cheerfully grasp one end of the handle of western political discourses – nationalism – but are exceedingly resistant to secularism Both ideas are new to India, but they are also new in many European countries, including Britain, India's former colonial ruler. The view of secularism as a 'gift of Christianity to mankind,' associating it uniquely with European history, reduces diverse and complex histories to flat binaries. The West is uniquely secular, while the East is uniquely religious (van der Veer 2001. 15) In truth, the secular and religious have historically shown themselves to be mutually interdependent and this interdependence was crucial to the formations of nationalism, in both Britain and India, during roughly the same period

Peter van der Veer perceives the growth of a 'secular atmosphere' in public life in Britain consolidating itself somewhere between 1860 and

the turn of the century The assertion of Empire in Mills' writings, for instance, predicated itself on an idea of the Christian self that connected theological notions with progress and with the notion of a 'mission in the world' (*Ibid* 28). This made place for the freedom of religious expression, for the diversity of religious opinions contribute to the idea of moral progress Freedom is foundational for the expression of religious freedoms. Van der Veer remarks on the importance of evangelical movements in the creation of the public sphere in Britain, an experience mirrored in the whole range of religious and missionary movements which were critical to the making of a public sphere in India

Secularisation proceeded differently in different European countries and was, everywhere, the not uncontested outcome of different forces. In Britain, national sentiment wove itself less around Protestantism than around a modern, civilised Christianity opposing itself to uncivilised colony. In India, the wave of mission activity demanded an equal playing field for different missionary denominations and, hence, the 'secularity' of the state and an open public sphere. It led, in turn, to the production of anti-colonial Hindu reform movements that were as modern as they were, increasingly, anti-Muslim (*Ibid* 28-29)

The most systematic argument against secularism, in particular on the grounds of its alien (Christian) roots, is articulated by TN Madan (1997, 1998) and Ashis Nandy (1985, 1990, 1998) Madan and Nandy – one of them at least a self-defined 'anti-secularist' – are vehemently critical of the defence of secularism on the grounds that it is a principle that has worked in western polities and must therefore be necessary and desirable for India ¹ A decisive element of the critique of secularism is that secularism is impossible in India because it is anti-religious in its orientation. It does not take religions or religious sentiments and religious differences seriously. It is, therefore, of severely limited value in a society like India, where religion shapes beliefs and identities to a great extent. Nandy argues that secularism tries to push religion to the private sphere, but in India it is precisely this forcible retreat has that led to the resurgence of religion in a more aggressive and violent form (1990)

Madan (1998), in turn, has some rather breathtaking accusations to hurtle against secularism including that it is an impotent ideology that is incapable of countering fundamentalism. The privatisation of religion that lies at the heart of the notion of secularism, according to him, is unreachable by the religions of South Asia, it is only an achievement of western Christendom. Secularism simply fails to recognise the importance of religion in the lives of South Asians. Both Madan and Nandy use the critique against secularism to make arguments for the return to and harnessing of 'traditional' principles of tolerance in Indian society'.

The assertion I have made is that no argument in defence of the indigenous may divert attention away from the fact of the *newness* of the Indian political structure that was, in part, conceived of during the nationalist struggle and put in place after colonialism (see van der Veer 2001). The new political structure was based on an explicit rejection of the hierarchy and discrimination of aspects of traditional structures and ideologies. Hence, the defence of secularism, like that of democracy, must base itself not just on what it draws from within 'traditional' principles that may be akin to it, but on *new* ideas that India wanted its political system, at the time and the future, to reflect Secularism is new, but its newness is not a simple outcome of imposition Rather, a particular understanding of and *demand* for the secular arose in India out of the specific, if complex, character of the anti-colonial nationalist struggle, in and through the tussled negotiation with the British

The more fundamental focus of challenge here is to the idea posed by Madan and Nandy that secularism restricts religion to the zone of the private and that it fails, in any case, to give enough importance to people's religious beliefs. While secularism in India may be considered an import from nineteenth-century Europe (*Ibid* 71), its roots in an earlier period of European history are understood (Nandy 1990. 73, Madan 1998: 297, 317). The privatisation of religion is generally attributed to the Enlightenment, at which point, it is believed, the idea of the separation of the sphere of religion and the sacred from the state and the rational sphere of public discourse began to attain importance. Reference to the Enlightenment necessitates our engagement with the ideas and influence of philosophers such as Locke, Kant and Rousseau Kant has, in general (and not just in discourses to do with secularism), been held responsible for this stress on reason, at the cost of spirituality

In this context, is worth re-reading the Kantian understanding about Enlightenment Such a re-reading is offered by Michel Foucault.

Kant defines two essential conditions under which mankind can escape from its immaturity. The first of these conditions is that the realm of obedience and the realm of the use of reason be clearly distinguished. Humanity will reach maturity when it is no longer required to obey, but when men are told 'Obey, and you will be able to reason as much as you like' (1991 36)

The term reason here refers to a use of reason in which reason has no other end but itself One reasons for the sake of reasoning. To the first distinction, Kant adds another the distinction between private and public uses of reason. Reason must be submissive in its private use, while being free in public use. Till this point, we still appear to be in the domain of

secularism as scholars have argued the Enlightenment defined it private adherence accompanied by public discontent or disavowal.

However, Foucault has more to say

What constitutes, for Kant, this private use of reason? In what area is it exercised? Man, Kant says, makes a private use of reason when . he has a role to play in society and jobs to do to be a soldier, to have taxes to pay, to be in charge of a parish all this makes the human being a particular segment of society, he finds himself thereby placed in a circumscribed position, where he has to apply particular rules and pursue particular ends. On the other hand, when one is reasoning only in order to use one's reason then the use of reason must be free and public (*Ibid*)

One may, therefore, pay one's taxes, while arguing about the taxation system publicly and freely One may take responsibility for a chapel service as a pastor, while reasoning or arguing continually about religious dogmas. This is the characteristic of a mature state and mature individuals.

What one finds here is that Kant is not locating belief in the realmof the private, if that means the domestic or personal The private is eminently social, it is possible to adhere to religious beliefs and values, conduct oneself in religious pursuits, hold publicly religious posts and still partake of a modern democratic system. The condition for participation is not the dismissal of religion or even the secret or private pursuit of religion, but the admission and encouragement of discussion and debate for, about or even against any or all sets of ideas in the public sphere. The theoretical space chalked out for the religious in the organisation of the public reminds us of the place it is also said to have historically occupied in both Britain and the India (see van der Veer 2001). Here, it appears is the possibility of making a beginning in demarcating the space for the secular in the context of India's cultural diversity

While communal strife always brings forth the call to strengthen secularism, the argument that secularism exists merely as a bulwark against communalism constitutes a somewhat limited basis for its justification. The more fundamental ground for demanding and requiring a secular Constitution is the work of democracy within the rule of law. The secular, thereby, is foundational to democratic polities. The Taylorian argument that secularism is the kernel of democracy because of its link with equal citizenship is the basis for such a perception. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, or making religion a basis for citizenship, works counter to democracy and nationalism, in which large solidarities are sustained on the grounds of the principle of horizontal and direct access (Taylor 1998). Democracy levels the political inequalities of

individuals by placing no privilege on membership of any particular caste, ethnic group or community Democratic polities include and interact with individuals directly and equally

In the context of contemporary movements towards a Hindu nationalism, the question 'What is secularism for?' has assumed a greater import. The irreducible linkages between democracy, equal citizenship and a secular polity require imminent stress. There is an articulation in the literature of the argument that Hindu nationalism is fundamentally non-democratic 2 Taking into account current pronouncements, the Hindu nationalists, it has been argued by me, appear to hold a limited and distorted, understanding of democracy They really talk of 'electoral democracy' rather than democracy in its legal sense. As such, they conflate majority mandates with democratic rule. The idea appears in the form that 'if the majority rules, the majority has the right to make rules in its own interest' Within Hindu nationalism, the idea of the 'majority' is further confounded *Permanent* majorities or majorities based, largely, on ascribed characteristics (such as caste or religion) are taken as or are believed to be identical with chosen or political majorities or majorities that arise out of electoral politics (see also Mahajan 1999). This assumption is false Hindus may vote for Hindu nationalist parties or not The same goes for other groups However, the Hindu Right parties would like to represent only (and fully) the permanent Hindu majority leaving out all minorities, but apparently including Hindus who may not have elected them

The enunciation of my argument requires relying on ideas from John Rawls (1999) and, more critically, from Jurgen Habermas (see Deflem 1996; Habermas 1997) While for Max Weber, the state draws its legitimacy from the system of legal rules which bind the polity and have a 'rational' character, for Habermas the constitutional state draws its legitimacy, in the final analysis, from the 'democratic form of the political will-formation of citizens' (1997 73) Democracy is based, firstly, on the principle that all have an equal right to speak and to be heard and to expect justice (defined again on certain accepted principles) within the system. In other words, regardless of who rules or is in power at any point in time or who has voted for whom in the electoral system, the rights of all citizens are the responsibility of a democratic state in a non-partisan way It is this principle of democracy that is linked in a relationship of elective affinity, in fact of necessary affinity, with the principle of secularism To comprehend this more clearly, it is worth quoting again from Habermas, at some length, in his description of a 'proceduralist understanding of democracy'

the democratic procedure is institutionalised in discourses and bargaining processes. No one has worked this out more energetically than John Dewey. 'Majority rule, just as majority rule, is as foolish as its critics charge it with being But it never is *merely* majority rule. "The means by which a majority comes to be a majority is the more important thing" antecedent debates, modification of views to meet the opinions of minorities. The essential need, in other words, is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion'. Deliberative politics acquires its legitimating force from the discursive structure of an opinion- and will-formation that can fulfil its socially integrative function only because citizens expect its results will have a reasonable quality (*Ibid* 304)

Democracy predicates itself on reasonableness and rational debate and discussion It does so *necessarily*, both as a moral and pragmatic imperative As Rajeev Bhargava argues, in his elucidation of the minimum conditions for the survival of democracy, 'democracy is incompatible with violent settlements of disputes over power' and the state must be relatively independent of groups and classes in society (1998a 10) His argument goes even further than the one I have made, in that it says that democracies based on pragmatic consensus are unstable in relation to those based on consensus as a moral imperative

Therefore, each class and ethnic group must learn to live with the fact that its objectives cannot be met in entirety. This happens in two ways People may realise the necessity of a consensus for which no compelling reason exists from within A democracy produced in such tremulous situations is a *modus vivendi*. Quite another situation arises when out of enlightened self interest, or for a broader moral vision of granting one another respect, people are prepared from within their own set of internal reasons to forsake in part their objectives to arrive at a principled compromise. This is a necessary condition for stable democracies (*Ibid*)

Secularism, in short, is for democracy and, critically, for rule of law, for the moment, at least, nothing more and *certainly* nothing less

In Indian public and political discourse, secularism is mentioned invariably in the context of 'minority rights'. Indeed, this popular construction, fed by shortsighted political currents, fails to point out, absolutely critically, that community rights in the constitution have been accorded to *all* communities *Minority* rights, made almost infamous by Articles 15, 16, 29 and 30, are actually only a part, an accentuation, of rights of all communities to their personal laws, culture and rights to maintain educational institutions. Hindus have their personal laws, the only (though, important) difference being that the state has reformed

some of these in specific ways. In fact, even more pertinently, Hindus enjoy rights that are not accorded to any community – the law recognising the Hindu undivided family as a single taxable unit, for instance Secondly, even certain secular laws, such as the Special Marriage Act of 1954 appear to work to impose sanctions on marriages between a Hindu (particularly male) and non-Hindu ³

Framing the debate in the context of 'minority rights' not only falsifies and screens, as I have argued, the legal context of community rights constitutionally assured in India, it also feeds very easily into majority antipathy towards minorities by providing fodder for political acrimony over 'appeasement' When structured thus, the issue of religious rights of minorities becomes principally focused on the question of personal laws. Thus, secularism is viewed as some kind of exercise instituted as a favour to minorities. Secularism becomes, in a word, dispensable

Secularism is better ensured by linking it directly to the maintenance of democracy and the rule of law. In sum, I have argued that the idea of the secular is new both for us and for the developed world and, in each country, it has emerged out of particular and, sometimes, peculiar, struggles and debates. The newness of the space of the secular does not mean it presses for the relegation of religion to the sphere of the domestic. On the contrary, there appears an acceptance of the place of religion in modern societies and of the fact that citizens will have duties and beliefs, practices and responsibilities of a religious nature. Such duties are, in fact, accepted alongside of and in the same breath as eminently 'secular' duties of citizens, such as the payment of taxes. Diverse religious and cultural traditions may therefore flourish in a secular India, contrary to the views of those who espouse the antisecularist manifesto.

If the practice of religions is accepted and encouraged, what is the understanding of the space of secularism that marks such a polity? Secularism in a multi-religious society implies the right to practice any religion or none combined with the right to dissent from or debate religious and non-religious ideas including ideas about laws relating to religion freely, though peacefully At another level, what has been stressed is that the political sociology of India has a tendency to ignore the history and trajectories of South East Asian countries in discussions of democracy, secularism or pluralism Indian scholars, especially, set out with a map of the world in which all nations are erased but for India and a few western countries, the latter often simply condensed to 'the West' Such an outlook disengages from any efforts to document, in a comparative perspective, the struggles of other post-colonial and

developing countries with modern political practices and thought It also feeds very easily into the self-pitying discourses of contemporary Hindu fundamentalists who bemoan the 'foisting' of secular principles on a traditional Hindu society and polity, when they are not claiming that secularism is nothing but the famed 'tolerance' of Hindu culture

It has been argued that a comparative view that registers the experiences of different countries in South and South East Asia enables us to think about how a range of non-Christian cultures mediated the ideas of secularism and democracy, how they shaped these ideas and how they developed policies and practices around them. It also sensitises us to their struggles with the secular, not allowing us the luxury of believing that ours is the only society to which notions of the secular came from outside or the only one in which the secular has to be grappled and contended with, no easy answers readily issuing forth

The historical engagement with the secular of countries in the South Asian region has been somewhat unsettled Nepal, Sri Lanka and India made commitments of different kinds to protect minorities, these commitments have altered over the decades and have, in any case, been honoured in varying degrees. We need to understand a little about the experiences of countries within the South and South East Asian region, for this may help us to comprehend more fully the complex processes behind the rise of 'majority' fundamentalism in many of these countries. A number of Indian scholars tend to look exclusively to certain strands in Indian history in order to 'explain' the source of the recent rise in Hindu fundamentalism.

However, even a cursory look at the trajectories of our neighbours reveals that India has no monopoly on movements on behalf of a particular religio-ethnic majority. As Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka and Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake argue, while there has been an increasing ethnicisation of politics in the South and South-East Asian region as a whole, what seems to be 'new about recent culture clashes is the scale on which processes of nation-state building and globalisation appear to have unleashed local conflicts in ethnic terms, as well as the extent to which dominant ethno-religious groups have developed minority complexes in countries like Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and Nepal' (1999 9)

They point out the commonalities of experience of these four countries in the process of nation-building. Despite complex dissimilarities of geographical and social configuration and historical engagement with colonial rule, there are several correspondences between these countries. Not only have these countries historically had problems in dealing with difference, in each of them, the majority religio-ethnic community has expanded its sphere of influence in the realm of politics.

and governance at the cost of the minority groups Another area of commonality emerges from the shared history of the region Both South and South East Asia have long been areas which have seen internal migration and mixed settlement, this has produced complex engagements with diasporic populations that further complicate the manufacture of nationhood as well as the production of community within a rapidly globalising political and cultural space

Thus, the following conclusions are drawn From the perspective of studies on India, this kind of comparison makes the idea that majority fundamentalism can only and completely be explained by the peculiar circumstances of Indian history and Partition somewhat dubious. The fact that such movements on the part of religio-ethnic majorities are not exclusive to India certainly seems to suggest that other more common factors may be involved. In other words, we need to encourage research in which the asking of more nuanced questions with respect to development patterns and the engagement with modernity of countries not long released from varying forms of colonial rule are centralised.

Moreover, a comparative perspective would entail that both political structure and development patterns need weaving into the analysis, which has, to date, tended to concentrate too much on particularities and uniqueness. One is emphatically reminded that Hinduism is manifestly not the only religion that has a discomfort with certain aspects of secularism and India is not the only post-colonial country to find itself grappling with the secular India and Indian scholars have to turn to other countries in the non-western world to understand the ways in which these have negotiated modernity and the calls of religion. In Malaysia, for instance, despite the disfavour into which secularism has recently fallen, pluralism is manifestly still a credo of social and political life. Divisive politics have been discarded for an emphasis on growth and inclusion

In other words, modernity has been found to be compatible with the secular, while experiments with its opposite have seen unpalatable consequences everywhere If even a religion considered as 'conservative', so-called, as Islam in Malaysia has been creatively harnessed to modernity through the idea of secularism, then clearly the secular has value for a country like India and the 'anti-secularist' scholar who is vehemently critical of secularism, particularly on the grounds of its alien, Christian roots may need to reconsider his ideas

Thus, by gaining knowledge of the experiences of its Asian neighbours, India and Indian scholars may begin to unlearn some of the assumptions of their analyses so far If we can begin to understand that India is not altogether unique in its problems, we may also learn to believe that it is not alone in the kinds of solutions it must try to seek

Concluding Remarks

Through the tracing of these experiments in different though related fields, I seek to mark out my own negotiations with the work of constructing models for South Asian research. A fairly consistent perspective is retained, which arises in part from the significant fact that in all the areas — Christianity, conversion and secularism — one finds oneself dealing precisely with the terrain where concepts and terms engage and conflict, but necessarily have to take cognisance of each other. There is no question, therefore, of substituting the one with another; those in search of radical new alternatives to available concepts may not find much to enthuse them in this perspective. However, it is in the space of contest and contrast — between differing notions of 'conversion', for instance, or between competing ideas of what constitutes worship or ritual — that I seek to locate my analysis, and it is this that I offer here as a possible contribution to the debate

Notes

- 1 The idea that secularism should be rejected because it is associated with 'western Christianity' can be critiqued from another angle. The West was Christian long before it was secular or before it discovered the value of secularism. Secularism was arrived at in different western nations as a result of their peculiar and protracted struggles with religious discriminations and conflicts of all kinds. The West was not born into the secular. Secularism was chosen by western countries, and they too had to learn and teach themselves its value in relation to their own histories.
- Bhargava asserts, 'Secularism is a condition of democracy If democracy is to exist or survive, different religious groups [for instance], no matter what their numerical strength, must renounce the idea that they can use the political process—to create a society congruent only with their particular values and interests' (italics added, 1998—11) With respect to Hindu nationalism, Tapan Basu et al point out 'The homogenising consequences of the claim to speak uniquely for a community defined by religious identity alone is present in all varieties of communalism, but only majority communalism can change the nature of the Indian polity, subverting the basic principles of democracy and secularism' (italics added, 1993—2)
- For instance, the effect of a marriage und the Special Marriage Act of 1954 of a Hindu male member of an undivided family tho professes the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain religion with a non-Hindu shall be defined to effect his severance from such family. This severance implies that he is lisqualified from inheritance. Such a sanction does not, it may be stressed, apply in inter-caste marriages and or in a marriage of any person who professes the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain religion with a person who professes the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain religion. It also does not apply to a Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain who i arries under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955.

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Sociology and Muslims in India: Directions, Trends, Prospects

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As compared to the number of Muslims in India – India has the second largest Muslim population in one country in the whole world - the sociological work available on Muslims has been disproportionately small While the situation is changing today, there are still many areas that need exploration My aim in this paper is to identify the trends in the sociological studies on Muslims in India, so, I shall not be discussing individual works in any detail Moreover, while I have tried to look at the published monographs and books, I cannot claim that the review is comprehensive My aim is to look at the issues and debates that have been covered in the sociological studies of Muslims in India, and to point to the kind of institutional and other supports that are needed to improve the situation in the future. The disciplines of history and political science have produced more work on Muslims, and one should count this as part of the corpus available to sociologists Unfortunately, sociologists have tended to ignore this work. It is only of late that not only the subject matter, but also the perspectives have begun to merge so that sociological works and historical works have been able to mutually benefit

Many theoretical and empirical issues arise in the study of communities based on world religions. In the anthropological study of Islam, for instance, a major issue has been that of definition of Islam itself. The variety of practices found in the Muslim communities across the world was, in the 1970s and 1980s, the starting point of theoretical questions on how a religion with one common text could at the same time have such different practices associated with it in different locales. Some of the frameworks that were developed to look at this problem of variety had their resonance in the studies on Muslims in India. As I shall illustrate below, these issues, when taken up in India, had implications that have to be understood in the context of a changing political climate

It is in the context of a changing political climate that I need to make one more introductory comment. It may be belabouring the obvious to mention that the term 'Muslim' in the Indian context has tended more and more to conflate a social as well as religious identity. Less and less do people connect to the fact that there is as much diversity in the Muslim population as there are among the Hindus. As far back as 1963,

S. Misra described 130 Muslim communities in Gujarat alone More recently, the Anthropological Survey of India's *People of India* project (Singh 1996) talks of India's diversities, not only that of Muslims, and identifies as many as 15 percent who cannot be classed as one or other. The region of origin, history of conversion, class background, and migration are some of the sources of this diversity Such variations are found not only on social aspects, but they exist in religious observances as well

Many religious sects are represented among Muslims in India Conversion to these sects was usually not an individual matter, but was, more often, the joint decision of a whole caste. This resulted in endogamous communities in which there was a continuation of many erstwhile customs, which continue to act as community markers even today. These give Islam and Muslim communities in India a distinctive character. Notwithstanding this, today, there is a tendency to categorise Muslims as a whole, as opposed to Hindus as a whole. A number of other such dichotomies—tolerant/fanatic, modernist/traditional operate in simplistic ways, easily visible in day-to-day media reports. Sociologists have not contributed much to rectify such stereotypes. In fact, to a large extent, sociologists themselves seem to have replicated the majority-minority distinction in the study of communities other than Hindu communities, leaving the field open for the proliferation of misconceptions

The implications of this are important for us to consider in terms of the concern with indigenisation that is one of the major concerns of the discipline today. In the context of decreasing contact between the communities, sociologists too have to become self-conscious about how their own approach to looking at the Indian reality has affected the problems taken up for study Was sociology in India more *Hindu* sociology than sociology of *India*? How is the situation changing today? Issues of identity have become salient worldwide since migration has made more societies — especially in the West — realise that their own societies have become more diverse in more ways than they were earlier. The ways in which diversity and difference were addressed in India in the past, and the ways in which they are developing today in the context of the major economic and social changes taking place not only in India but worldwide, are issues that we need to address very self-consciously

Early Post-Independence Studies

Reviews of work on Muslims have pointed to the paucity of work on Muslims since Independence (I Ahmad 1972, Madan 1995) Satish Saberwal (2005) has commented that there were ideological, conceptual and methodological reasons for the scarcity of basic enquiry concerning

Muslims at this time He suggests that one of the ideological reasons for the neglect of Muslims during this period was that, following the trauma of Partition, there was a tendency to ignore marks of difference within Indian society Scholars working with categories of 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' could be accused of displaying a communal outlook Conceptually, the focus on caste — an issue which I will discuss in more detail below — as identified with Indian society, and methodologically, the disinterest of sociologists in historical developments, contributed to a general neglect of Muslims in sociology in India

The broad issues of sociological concern in the years following Independence took up the challenges and possibilities of modernisation and development, while more substantive investigations were made of villages, caste, kinship, ritual, and issues of inequality arising out of the nexus of caste and class (Béteille 2003) These were, by and large, looked at as large projects, and there seems to have been no thinking at that time on exploring the impact on different religious communities Apart from this, there was perhaps a disinterest in religion, arising out of a need to commit to the values of modernisation, in which religion was seen as one of the major handicaps to development. At most, the interest in religiously defined groups was with looking at features of religion that were most likely to play a facilitating or obstructive role in modernisation.

There were a few monographs that looked at issues that were specific to Muslims Leela Dube's Matriliny and Islam (1969) took up the theoretical issue of how a matrilineal kinship system works in a society which otherwise adheres to Islam, 'which in its ideology as well as in its prescriptions, mandates and injunctions assumes and emphasises a patrilineal social structure' (Ibid 3) Pratap Aggarwal's (1971) research on the Meos started with the interesting question of why the Meos, who for about 300 years had been nominal Muslims, became more committed to their Muslim identity after Partition Both these dealt with somewhat unusual situations, and both looked at religion in different ways Mattison Mines (1972) looked at the question of entrepreneurship among a Muslim community in South India, keeping in view Max Weber's proposition that a major factor in the development of capitalism in the West was religion Mines attempted to show that the Muslim community he studied was not lacking in rationality when it came to doing business His study was in line with other studies that looked at entrepreneurship among other groups, like the Jains, who were successful businesspersons despite belonging to a religion which would be characterised as 'other worldly' by Weber As far as the role of religion was concerned, the studies considered religion as one among other factors, and took the 'five

pillars' as the backdrop against which they explored the variations and contradictions in religious practice in the communities studied

Apart from these monographs, there was little that specifically looked at Muslims, whether as separate communities or even in terms of the general demographic situation. It was this kind of absence that led Imtiaz Ahmad (1972) to point out that, whether one looked at village studies, or modernisation and development studies, the absence of work on Muslims or, for that matter, on all the minorities, is striking. He was pointing to the lacuna in empirical work, since most studies looked at Hindu communities or castes, nevertheless, the question also raised the issue of how India itself was viewed. He pointed out that by not giving sufficient place to the non-Hindus in the study of India we would end up having Hindu sociology, Muslim sociology, Christian sociology, but not sociology of India.

Imtiaz Ahmad's collections of articles written on different aspects of Muslims in India were an attempt to remedy the situation as far as the lacuna in work on Muslims was concerned. His four edited books published in the 1970s and 1980s put together articles on Muslims in the areas of family and kinship, caste, modernisation and change, and religion and ritual. He articulated the framework that was evident in the articles.

While Muslims in India (as Muslims elsewhere) believe in and practice the cardinal pillars of the faith, the practice of Islam in India is heavily underlined 'by elements which are accretions, drawn from the local environment and contradict the fundamentalist view of the beliefs and practices to which Muslims must adhere (1981 7)

Many of the practices associated with rites of passage, customs, beliefs and social institutions were accordingly discussed in this framework, and accounted for either as 'survivals' or as 'diffusion' from Hindu customs Rituals especially were described as 'syncretic' Since this was the major frame in which the research interest on Muslims in India developed, I would like to contextualise the approach both in terms of the anthropological work on Islam and how this was played out in the Indian situation

In the 1970s and 1980s worldwide there was a growing realisation among anthropologists that Muslim societies were not simple reflections of the textual religion. The theoretical approach that was current at the time was that of the 'Great and Little tradition', and the focus of sociological studies of Islam and Muslim societies worldwide was on 'lived' Islam This was actually a theoretical advance over earlier studies, which had simply assumed that the textual practices as articulated by the *Ulama*

were the actual practices to be found in the community. The focus on 'lived' Islam was an effort to bring into the sociological forefront the fact that Islamic societies were quite diverse and that one could find in those societies a number of practices that went beyond the 'five pillars' Women's rituals, the different ways in which the Prophet was emulated, healing rituals, Sufi shrines, and women's rituals were some of the areas which were explored in Muslim societies.

A number of variations of the 'Great and Little tradition' approach emerged, in which dichotomies such as 'universal' and 'particular', 'transcendental' and 'practical', 'purist' and 'syncretic', 'orthodox' and 'heterodox', etc were used to describe what was seen as a conflict between the 'textual' and 'lived' Islam (see Roy 2005 32) A Roy also points out that this frame, through which the problem of diversity of religious practices was addressed, resulted in a tendency to exclude as 'Islamic' those practices that did not fit in with the *Ulama*'s definition of Islam Such practices were classed as 'local', 'cultural', etc and their existence in the communities studied was taken as evidence of inadequate Islamisation or as evidence that the process of conversion was gradual and slow The research question that was considered most interesting was how the local and the universal (or textual) were combined or contradicted in practice

The Study of Caste among Muslims

In India, this kind of research question was exemplified in the discussion of caste. One of the major areas of focus in the late 1970s and 1980s was caste. On the one hand, the interest in caste was in terms of its ideological aspects. This was inspired by Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (1980), which defined India as opposed to the West in terms of its approach to hierarchy. On the other hand, there were empirical investigations on caste, for instance, in village studies, which revealed how the field showed variations in caste not easily visible in the textual approaches of G.S. Ghurye or Dumont

The focus on caste as the defining feature of Indian society contributed further to the tendency to see India as primarily Hindu For Dumont, India was culturally Hindu, and other communities, religious groups and categories were by definition, therefore, secondary In Dumont's work, Muslims were of interest only in terms of how caste had 'contaminated' Muslim society, which according to the textual sources, should have been more egalitarian Peter van der Veer (1994–33) points out how the Orientalist assumptions dominated not only the theories in the social sciences that dealt with the caste system, but also discussions

on Hindu-Muslim relations, by relying on textual material for their understanding of the place of religion in Indian society. For Dumont, since the caste system was so primary, Muslims were marginal, because they were just like Hindus (in having caste), or marginal anyway either because they followed a 'foreign' religion or because of their numbers

The issue of caste did raise some theoretical question regarding the extent to which caste could be said to exist among Muslims in India, and the explanation for it (see Lindholm, 1986) Imtiaz Ahmad's book on caste (1978) had already pointed to the existence of communities which practised endogamy or had other practices that were similar to caste. The book identified many communities which practised endogamy and had restricted relationships with one another Dumont's discussion on caste among Muslims had looked at the issue only with reference to the textual contradiction between the normative egalitarianism of Islam and the hierarchy of Hindu society Imtiaz Ahmad's explanation for the existence of these practices among Muslims was that it was the impact of the wider Hindu society However, an alternative explanation was also put forward C Lindholm (1986) pointed out that there were similar practices in other parts of the Islamic world, and that, therefore, the existence of the practices described among the different Muslim communities represented in Imtiaz Ahmad's book could be considered to be part of a larger cultural milieu than just the Hindu Indian He pointed out that one should not only assume 'assimilation', but also question where and why there was resistance to assimilation

One can see in this exchange larger issues than just the question of caste Research questions regarding Muslims looked at how the wider Hindu society impinged on Muslims, but did not concern themselves with influences in the other direction. Apart from the question of what the proper comparative point should be (as raised by Lindholm), there is also the question of why the research questions on caste did not expand to looking at Muslims and other minorities to explore their social organisation, in terms other than of caste, or in terms of communities that did not see themselves as having caste in the same way that Hindus did. The caste system was the point of departure, the ground so to speak against which Muslims or others were judged. The research issue at this point was not social organisation or hierarchy in India as a land of different communities. Dumont identified India with Hindu and Hindu with caste. Other forms of social organisation were just not given that kind of attention (except for a few discussions on sect)

In actual terms, therefore, the study of Muslims in India seemed to mean the impact of Hinduism or Hindu cultures on Islam and Muslims In terms of social structure, the focus was on caste, in terms of religion, the mingling of Islamic and Hindu rituals. There was no theory of the interaction between the two systems which could discuss both Hinduism and Islam together. It was as if there were two complete systems that were interacting, not that each could be also affecting the other. The terms used to describe the 'Little' tradition also implied that there was no ideational content at all in the 'Little' tradition.

Lived Islam and Textual Islam: A False Dichotomy

The focus on 'lived' Islam was a necessary corrective to looking at Islam in an ahistoric manner, as the Islamist and religious scholars tended to do On the other hand, the focus on the syncretic and exotic was at the cost of looking at the everyday and textual practices in their own terms, and recognising that these too were embedded in the local culture and that they too could be of sociological interest. Unfortunately, the very focus on 'lived' Islam seems to have replicated the idea that there is a textual and a local, each clearly identifiable according to some external standard

Roy (2005) has traced the development of approaches to the study of 'popular' Islam and has lamented the tendency of social scientists to categorise the 'popular' as not 'Islamic' The point is very well taken However, it seems to me that Roy replicates the division, even in the process of criticising the Islamists and social scientists who have adopted this approach He continues to talk of the need to recognise that the relationship between the two is not always antagonistic, that it is sometimes complementary or may even involve inserting an 'Islamic' meaning or content into some cultural practice, in this way incorporating it into an Islamic framework These processes are clearly visible at the empirical level. However, treating tradition in this way not only makes a distinction that may or may not be meaningful for those who actually practice the religion, but it gives a fixity to definitions of Islam without relating these to the social groups they represent Also, it once again has the effect of ignoring those practices which cannot be easily classed as one or another

I would like to make two points in this connection. The first is regarding how to look at the distinction between the prescribed practices and others that are also done by Muslims in any particular context. Such distinctions have to be seen with reference to why that distinction is being made, in which context, by whom and with what effect. This means, first of all, recognising the *Ulama* as one among others who are trying to articulate what being Muslim means to them. It is important for researchers to recognise that in all Muslim societies such competing

definitions exist. They can become the source of acrimony and argument, and may also form the underlying consideration (along with others) in working out marriage arrangements, attributing marks of identity, creating sources of co-operation or conflict among different social groups at any point in time and so on

Moreover, the idea of what is the 'textual' is itself subject to change Roy (2005) has noted that historians studying Islam in India have provided ample evidence to show that the Muslims in India displayed a variety of practices – which became the focus of attention of the *Ulama* over time What is important is to recognise that the *Ulama*'s concerns arose at a historical point in time, that their effort to bring what they saw as nominal Muslims into accepting what they saw as the 'true' Islam must be seen in its own historical, social and political context. It is particularly important to remember this today when the dominant image of Islam worldwide is of a severe, fanatical, legalistic religion. With high publicity being given to the activities and practices of Muslim groups for whom Islam is dogma and who use religion to justify their activities, there is a tendency on the part of the general public to accept their claims rather than to recognise that they belong to a specific group, and that their statements must be seen in the context of their own background and in the context of the marginalisation that they are experiencing in the world today

Two, it is this narrow definition of what is textual versus other practices that has also contributed to the absence of studies which look at how ideas that may be found in the *Quran* (and in this sense textual) are also interpreted in different ways in different societies. For instance, terms such as *baraka* (or *barakat*), or *pak* (clean, pure in a religious sense) and *napak* (unclean) or even *halal* and *haram*, are terms that straddle the textual and the local. They arise out of concepts that are present in the *Quran*, but are contextualised and interpreted differently in different Muslim societies. In fact, even practices such as pilgrimage — a major event for Muslims — or the giving of charity, need to be studied not only as part of the Indian reality, but comparatively with other Muslim societies. Such studies, in fact, would add considerably to our understanding of Muslim societies and particularly Muslim society in India.

Alternative Perspectives

A discussion that tried to go beyond this polarity of text (viewed ahistorically) and context was initiated in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* by Veena Das (1984) and Gail Minault (1984) in response to Francis Robinson's (1983) comment that insufficient attention was being given

to the role of the *Ulama*, who presented a 'pattern of perfection' for people to emulate In response to this, Das made a case for a more open understanding of the text and the varied ways through which Muslims have indicated recognition of the *Quran* as a transcendent event. She pointed out that exegesis and interpretation have historically been major traditions of scholarship in the Islamic world – which itself indicates that interpretation was not an unproblematic matter. Not only have there been various interpretations even among the classical traditions, but the 'folk' versions too should not be considered as empty of meaning. She argued for a 'folk theology' and 'theological anthropology' to counter the tendency to either look only at the textual or only at the 'folk' practices. These positions have been reviewed in T.N. Madan (1995) and Roy (2005)

Finally, I would like to emphasise that we still need to find categories and approaches that help us to explore India, not only in terms of exclusive religious groups, but also in terms of their mutuality JPS Uberoi's study of medieval India (1996), in which he posits that both the Hindu and Muslim cultures shared the same underlying structure of medievalism, similar as he puts it, to the modern commonality of the languages of Hindi and Urdu, which are different in lexicon, but have a mutual intelligibility in Hindustani, provides a possible way to imagine India — a recognition that both need to be understood together as well as apart from one another, keeping in view diachronic processes

In the discussions above, we can see that there is an engagement with the concept of tradition and its limits, and the extent to which it can be extended By framing the question as they did, anthropologists seemed to have got caught in making the same dichotomies that a legal scholar would make No doubt, important points were made regarding the necessity of recognising that there is an ideational content even in 'folk' practices, or of showing how the past can provide creative insights into our present Absent in the discussions at this time is the question of how definitions of tradition link up with questions of power Traditions are not simply articulating with one another in a vacuum. Conflicts over the right to define the tradition, or the way tradition links up with secular power are today very important issues and concerns within and between communities The issue has become much more salient with the appropriation of tradition by political parties and its use as an electoral platform This question has emerged much more strongly in some recent works

In an earlier paper, I have discussed that the work on Muslims in India tended to cluster around three general themes Sufi shrines, women, and issues of identity (Fazalbhoy 1997) I will not repeat that argument here. I would like to make one final observation The discussions on 'lived' Islam inevitably raised the question of comparison, and whether there had not been an implicit understanding that it was the Middle East that was the heartland of Islam and, therefore, the appropriate point of comparison A few publications in the 1990s were perhaps indicative of a growing shift K Ewing (1988) and Madan (1995) both edited books with articles that included material on South Asia and South East Asia. Although the number of articles on Muslims in India were few, the work on India was put into the context of similar work in cultures which were dealing with situations that had some commonality with the Indian situation

Recent Developments

The issues taken up for anthropological study of Muslims more recently have taken the weight of looking at religion in the terms discussed above Political developments such as the demolition of the Babari masjid and the riots that followed have led to a change in the agenda of study There appears to have been a greater realisation that material on Muslims is lacking and that this needs to be remedied Studies of religion per se have gone into the background, and issues of nationalism, secularism, ethnicity, identity, pluralism and multiculturalism have come in for more close discussion. These discussions inevitably bring in the situation of Muslims as minorities It is, however, the general approach adopted in these studies that has been of help even in work that is more directly anthropological and sociological This is, no doubt, not only because of developments within India, but also because of events worldwide. The major advance that we see in the recent studies in India is that they are more historicised, they take the position that identities are social constructs, and that it is in the context of specific social and political developments that identities (including religious identities) take shape Furthermore, there is a far greater recognition that culture must be viewed as dynamic, and that religion today is deeply influenced by political events

The realisation that the position of Muslims needs to be monitored has resulted in some studies which have tried to survey the situation of Muslims with regard to specific parameters. For example, A. Ahmad (1993) and R Jain (2005) have looked at the state of education among Muslims An important development has been the release of Census data that gives a religion-wise break up of the population. This has allowed for investigations that can help to assess the situation of Muslims in a more objective manner.

The works by R Eaton (1994, 2004) and J B P More (2004), while they are historical, have made an important contribution to showing regional variations among Muslims Ethnographically based studies have also looked at different communities to see how mythology, history and politics are interwoven In different ways, the works by Shail Mayaram (1997), D Mehta (1997) and R Ahmed (2001) are examples of this Mayaram's work on the Meos is particularly important because it records Meo mythology and history, and shows how Meo identity arose out of the modern situations of nationalism, Partition and the active work of Tablighis The Meos, who can be seen as a liminal group, did not accept the loss of their culture easily Mayaram's work shows how the Muslim identity developed over time a reaction to being identified by others as much as it was a process of taking on an identity

What is important is the recording of the process, the movements that take place in the life of a community when events overtake them. There must have been innumerable such cases groups who lived their lives without necessarily realising that they were going to become liminal when the two major religious groups felt they needed to claim them as one or the other A recent translation of works in French brings together articles by a number of past and contemporary writers (Waseem 2003), all illustrating this complex process as it took place in India as Islam spread and encountered different religious communities. Although most of the articles are about the process that took place in the past (for example, a dialogue between Dara Shikoh and Lal Das, or the articles on Kabir, and on the Awadhı Sufi Malık Muhammad Jayası), the articles are important indications of how cultural interactions existed, how local cultural symbols were creatively used to communicate new ideas and incorporate new meanings, or transform meanings. Once again, we see how limited it is to discuss the spread of a religion in terms of doctrine. and or even to privilege the 'five pillars' as the main indication of what being a Muslim was all about As in Mayaram's work, we see how the categories 'Hindus' and 'Muslims' as two neatly demarcated communities, which are in mutual opposition to each other, does not reflect what happened historically This is not to say that the past was without conflict and tension In the very fact that dialogues took place, or ideologies competed for acceptance, we can see that the process had its own tensions (see Hasan and Roy 2005)

The concern with how the communities are getting polarised can be seen in the studies of sacred spaces and what is happening to them under the pressures of contemporary political developments (for instance, Assayag 1990, Sikand 2003, Warren 2004) Although Warren's work may not be classified strictly as anthropological, it does map how the

Muslim element in the Sai Baba cult has gradually been eliminated, such that today it is identified as a wholly Hindu shrine, even while acknowledging Sai Baba as an example of a holy person who was accepted by both traditions. Such studies indicate how local geographies and local histories are being rewritten in response to very contemporary circumstances.

The work of Z Hasan and R Menon (2004) on Muslim women contextualises not only the women's situation, but provides material on the relative position of Muslims in different parts of the country on a number of economic and social indicators. The study is invaluable for taking away the focus on issues of personal law, or other 'problems' of Muslim women Although there are a few articles that look at issues connected to the personal law, other articles have addressed education, women's role in politics, women and madarasah education, and communal issues Again, the effort is to contextualise Muslim women's lives and move away from explaining Muslim women's position simply with reference to the Personal Law A survey of Muslim women with comparative material on Hindus from different sections of society, and incorporating regional variations, helps to put Muslim women's issues into a comparative perspective. We see from these studies that Muslims are in some situations slightly better than the scheduled castes, but in all cases below the upper caste Hindus

I have already referred to *Living Together Separately* by Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy (2005) As the title indicates, there is recognition of the diverse contexts in which Hindus and Muslims have interacted, sometimes with antagonism, often with shared understandings and experiences Although the subtitle is 'Cultural India in History and Politics', the issues it engages with – diversity, tradition, and composite culture – make it an important resource for the sociologist as well

In the recent past, there has been a rise in the Muslim backward classes (OBCs) who have become politically more active and also more self-conscious about their situation. In 2003, a Conference was held at the Mumbai University, on the issue of the Muslim OBCs. It was a remarkable event because the initial impetus came from a group of Muslims belonging to the OBC category themselves. The Conference brought together scholars as well as activists. Some of the papers presented at the Conference were later published in the *Economic and Political Weekly* as a special issue (2003). The development of a movement among the Muslim OBCs indicates the kind of tensions and antagonisms that are emerging among Muslims and the effort to address the issues of marginalisation and struggles for power of these communities within the larger Muslim community and in the country as a whole

I would like to make special mention of Rowena Robinson's book on the aftermath of communal violence (2005) Rowena Robinson has followed up victims of the 1992-93 riots in Mumbai and the 2003 genocide in Gujarat The book looks at the narratives through which the victims describe the events at the time of the riots and subsequently how they have adjusted their lives to the changed circumstances. The book is important for several reasons it brings the voice of the victim into sociological analysis, it brings into focus the issue of the responsibility of the academic in situations of this kind, and it also raises the question of the researcher's positionality in conducting this kind of research. In this way, the book brings to the fore issues that are very significant, both methodologically and empirically, and will hopefully lead to more explorations of a similar kind.

Thus, while the situation is much better than it was earlier, problems do remain I would like to say that it is not possible today to think of studying a Muslim community in the Indian context without considering the impact of political developments which have made Muslims highly insecure as a whole Apart from the accusation that Muslims are 'antinational' or that they owe allegiance to Muslim countries rather than to India, one of the sources of building a negative identity for Muslims has been in connection with religious practices. The treatment of women and polygamy are constantly trotted out as identifying the Muslim However, the semiotics of communal violence have revealed how the idea of purdah and polygamy have contributed to a perverse preoccupation with sexuality on the part of the perpetrators of violence, such that the attacks on women were particularly malevolent and sadistic (see Sarkar 2002, Rowena Robinson 2005) This points to something more than just political significance. This is a reality that cannot be ignored. Apart from this, the political and other implications of publishing material that has the potential to be used by different political groups for their own agendas, is a constant fear There is also the problem that in some contexts, the information collected may, in fact, reinforce the negative image of Muslims unless it is contextualised. These are problems that have been faced by other groups earlier, and some open discussion on this matter is needed

I would like to end with some comments on syllabi and teaching While it was not possible to look at the syllabi of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in different parts of the country, it is a safe generalisation that much of the above work would not easily translate into material that can be incorporated into syllabi. In discussions with college teachers to identify topics where there is discussion on Muslims in the syllabus, I was able to gather that Muslims were discussed in very

select areas Apart from some general statements regarding the diversity in the country, which would include some discussion of what this diversity consists of, the areas where more detailed discussion on Muslims could be included were most likely to be on the topics concerning caste, personal law (gender) and communalism (social problems) This is a very selective and partial exposure, and can only confuse students about Muslims in India being somehow nominal Muslims because of caste, but 'fundamentalist' and fanatical Muslims because of the personal law issue It is also likely to reinforce current prejudices regarding Muslims as being primarily governed by religion and as somehow being either beset by problems or as being the source of problems. A case in point is the discussion on Muslims in a commonly used textbook at the undergraduate level (Ahuja 1999) The only separate entry on Muslims in the index is with reference to marriage practices (compared to seven broad entries for Hindus covering basic tenets, society, culture, marriage, nationalism, and communalism) The only other area where there is discussion on Muslims is in the discussion on communalism, which comes under the chapter on religion. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss how communalism has been dealt with but this is an area in which reflection is needed Discussion of Muslims in these contexts is unlikely to be contextualised in terms of community, class and other features of the social structure. The lack of empirical material is an important factor here, but not the only one Historians have produced work on Muslims that could be incorporated. This would require a change of perspective not only to include the material, but also in terms of the need to do so in the first place. The situation at the postgraduate level is not much better Introducing a course on the anthropology of Muslim societies at the postgraduate level could, in fact, be one way of initiating discussion on issues connected with Muslims in India and worldwide

We can take some lessons from the way gender studies developed as an academic discipline. Once there was recognition that there was a need to generate material on women so as to counter the 'male centric' nature of knowledge, there were several institutional and other factors that came into play. The publication of reports, allocation of funds, and the setting up of centres of women's studies in colleges and universities, all helped to change the orientation of the different disciplines to make them incurporate gender issues more centrally into their different discipline areas. Specialisations in women's studies gave encouragement and possibilities of career advancement to persons who researched on women's issues.

A similar effort is necessary to generate material on Muslims in the different specialisations of the discipline. While the situation is better

today than' it was some years ago, when sociologists hardly acknowledged that sociology in India was largely Hindu sociology, today a start has been made with discussion on this issue. On the one hand, some special attention in the form of research grants, the setting up of institutions for research and documentation and so on are needed Most specialisations develop when there is a 'felt need' for work in a particular area In India, Delhi seems to be a centre from where a lot of the work on Muslims has been generated Library facilities, funding, a community of academics aware and concerned about the issue certainly contribute to the development of a special area. As I have tried to show in the earlier part of the paper, there are theoretical issues to be grasped, appropriate concepts to be worked out, and perspectives on how to approach the issues developed For all this, a community of interested scholars is needed, and special efforts to promote such groups need to be made Internet facilities can be of invaluable assistance in this An orientation through which work on minority groups would become part of discussions on specific areas - be it kinship, urban studies, or any other aspect ın sociology - will itself help to generate empirical work

A trend in recent times is that Muslim institutions are themselves beginning to publish material and discussion on issues that could have been done by social scientists. For instance, the Institute of Objective Studies has a number of publications, including a journal Jamia Hamdard has recently started a Centre for Muslim Studies and even the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies has some writings on popular culture which includes discussions on Muslims. Linkages between such institutions and university departments or research institutions could be of mutual help to generate more work on Muslims.

The thrust areas for the ICSSR also do not specify works on any of the minority communities. This means that people who do their initial work in areas pertaining to minorities may find it difficult to fit themselves into the existing specialisations in different universities. Today, it seems that there is a general recognition among the social scientists that work on the minorities is needed, and that special efforts may be required to make this into a reality. The UGC and ICSSR need to think of giving special attention to these areas

In conclusion, it seems to me that there is a greater interest now in looking at Muslims than was the case earlier Methodologically too, the studies on communalism, ethnicity and nationalism have shown that it is necessary to look at processes that were common for Hindus and Muslims (see Saberwal 2005) Perhaps sociology is gradually becoming more representative of the social reality of diversity in the country and the need to look at how the different communities have interacted over

time Issue of power and tradition, to which I referred earlier, are more easily addressed today than earlier because there are more intellectual resources to help look at the situation. A reorientation such that work on Muslims — or any minority community, for that matter — becomes as automatically a part of any research project as is now the case with gender, would indicate that there has been some real change. There should be recognition that while the non-Hindu population may be a minority politically, they should not be considered a minority when it comes to anthropological work.

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1 The categorisation of the practices as 'lived' or 'textual' could also be seen to have another unfortunate implication. Talib (personal communication) comments that the worldview of modernisation, which had its genesis in colonialism, had an impact on how Islam and Muslims were viewed. The reaction to the marginalisation experienced by Muslims in different parts of the Muslim world resulted in a political reaction which was expressed in a religious idiom and gave rise to the view that Islam and modernity were incompatible.

Both the nationalist and the modernist worldviews had an amazing convergence both celebrated the modification of religious practice from its customary/traditional mould (though what the mould is also became problematic) In the modernist discourse veiling, religious education, patriarchy and gender discrimination, lack of public space, democratic culture became the chosen themes Madrasahs bad, suff khangahs good', 'Islam in politics bad, in culture good', women with headscarf problematic, women without the customary attire good', came to produce the stereotype that haunts the choice of preferred themes in the academics

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Situating Dalits in Indian Sociology increase mater 380 in 1980 in 198

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Gandhiji, after discussing the problems of dalits with Ambedkar, asked Mahadev Desai why Ambedkar told him that he (Aínbedkar) did not have a motherland Desai explained that it was because Ambedkar was an untouchable. Gandhiji was surprised to learn this, and he told Desai that he had thought Ambedkar was a conscientious Brahmin who spoke for the untouchables. Later, in the 1960s, on the policy of reservation, Jawaharlal-Nehruargued, in 1862 with a many actions at the later of the untouchables.

It is true that we are tied up with certain rules and conventions about helping the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. They deserve help but, even so, I dislike any kind of reservation, more particularly in service. If we go in for reservations on communal and caste basis we swamp, the bright and able people and remain second-rate of third-rate (1989, 456-57).

Even as late as 1999, a high profile university professor, who has extensively worked on the issues related to caste, asked me 'What is the difference between Jai Shri Ram and Jai Bheem, as both are religious symbols?' I had to explain to the learned professor that this 'Jai Bheem' is not the Bheem of *Mahabharata*, it is the first name of Bheem Rao Ambedkar which has now become the greeting symbol of dalits Another narrative is that of a young girl who asked her parents whether they were Scheduled Castes? The astonished parents asked her why she was asking that question The girl explained that the teacher had announced in the class that those belonging to Scheduled Castes will be getting books and uniform free of cost

The foregoing narratives are representative of the understanding of politicians and social reformers, academicians and layman about dalits who account for 16 percent of India's population. The narratives, no doubt, raise a vital point regarding misunderstandings of certain facts about dalits. However, more importantly, they raise the question as to how can an academic fail to understand dalits. Thus, the question if the dalits have been studied objectively by the Indian sociologists?

This paper throws light on how Indian sociology has failed to locate dalits in the Indian society, in general, and the Hindu social order, in SOCIOLOGICAL BULLETIN, 54 (3), September-December 2005, Pp. 514-532

particular Why, even after a century of development of sociology in the country, the dalits occupy a dubious position particularly vis-à-vis the Hindu social order? The 'book view' of caste argues that there are only four varnas, but many sociologists – Indian, European and others – have portrayed dalits as the fifth varna of Hindu society without any convincing explanation. Although they are practically included for exploitation of every type of labour, why have they been included in the theoretical scheme of varna as the fifth varna of the Hindu social order? No sociologist has given a convincing explanation for the fact that, even though they are included for exploitation of cheap labour, they have been excluded from every other interaction pattern.

Usage of politically incorrect terminology by Indian sociologists in their discussions on dalits is the second issue discussed in this paper. In the name of objectivity, Indian sociologists have used the suggestive terminology like 'untouchables', 'lower castes', Harijans, etc. for the dalits. These terms, coined by intellectuals and the elite of society, are not objective categories. The objective situation is that the dalits were/are known either by their regional caste name or by a term equivalent of 'untouchable'

Our third contention in this paper is that, because of the ambiguous location of dalits and the use of a value-loaded terminology for them, Indian sociologists have not been able to record substantive issues related to dalits. The sociological literature has only descriptions about dalits without any qualitative and quantitative study of their 'social exclusion' Indian sociologists have also missed to record the impact of this 'social exclusion' on the life-pattern of dalits and their loss of cultural capital Indian sociologists, never bothered to recognise the contributions made by dalits playing different roles in the economy, polity and society. One wonders, how many studies have been conducted by Indian sociologists straight from Cheri, Cahmrauti, Maharwada – the bustees of the dalits?

Two major points have been recorded in the paper because of the aforesaid ambiguity of position of dalits in the Hindu social order. The first point is that the objectivity and authenticity of studies of different structures and processes are being questioned by the dalits in their writings. Dalits view the structures like caste and village as exploitative rather than as functional. Moreover, they term sanskritisation as the process of assertion and attempt by dalits to lead a hygienic lifestyle, rather than as an imitation of the upper castes.

The second point is that foreign concepts and theories like class, relative deprivation, poverty, etc., which are used to analyse the condition of dalits are inappropriate and inadequate. Therefore, the paper suggests the necessity of evolving a new concept or modifying the existing concepts

which can appropriately evaluate the social exclusion of dalits The new concept could be 'Human Distress Index'.

Definition of the Term 'Dalit'

In the annals of Indian history, dalits were referred to with different nomenclatures – like Chandalas, Avarnas, Achhuts, Namashudra, Parihas, Adi-Dravida, Ad-Dharmis, depressed classes, oppressed Hindus, Harijans, etc – at different point of time However, after the emergence of the Dalit Panther's movement in Maharashtra in the 1970s, they preferred to be called as dalits. The definition of dalits as propounded by the Dalit Panthers was a class definition and it included members of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), the landless and poor peasants, women, and all those who were exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion (Murugkar 1991 237). It was the Panthers' political compulsion that made them propound such a definition of a category which never existed before, as they wanted to forge an alliance among these aforesaid groups

However, sociologically, the term dalits has been strictly used for exuntouchables of Indian society who have faced the worst kind of social exclusion. The term 'social exclusion' has been defined as a multi-dimensional process in which various forms of exclusion are combined participation in decision-making and political processes, access to employment and material resources, and integration into common cultural process. When combined, they create acute form of exclusion that finds a spatial manifestation in particular neighbourhoods (Madanipour 1998·22). To this, we have to add the elements of religious justification of such exclusion of dalits based on *dharma* and *karma*. Based on the above elements of social exclusion, we can argue that dalits are different from Scheduled Tribes, women and poor persons among caste Hindus that were included in the Dalit Panthers' definition of dalits

At the out set, economically, a poor person is different from a dalit A poor person may be deprived in the economic sphere, especially of income necessary to participate in the economy. However, he/she may not be necessarily deprived in social and cultural spheres, that is, he/she may not face the same type of exclusion in the social and cultural life of his neighbourhood as dalits face. For instance, a penury-stricken Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra is never forced to live outside the boundaries of the village. They interact among themselves at least in secular realms on more or less equal terms. However, dalits were excluded form the main residential area of the village, and were kept outside the interaction pattern of its social life. Hence, we can argue that a poor person

may be economically or politically deprived, but he/she is never excluded from the social and cultural spheres. An ex-untouchable is deprived in all the three — social, economic and political — realms. T. K. Oommen, therefore, has rightly pointed out, 'If proletarian consciousness is essentially rooted in material deprivations. dalit consciousness is a complex and compound consciousness which encapsulates deprivations stemming from inhuman conditions of material existence, powerlessness and ideological hegemony' (1990–256)

The social exclusion of an ex-untouchable is so overpowering that, even though he/she attains economic and political mobility through hard work, he/she is not accepted in totality by the castes located higher up in the hierarchy. Another aspect of social exclusion is that, because of their extreme form social exclusion, dalits could not accumulate social capital which could give them the potential to develop their consciousness. Moreover, because of lack of this consciousness, they could not revolt against the Hindu social order for so long. Their cultural co-option in the Hindu social order, even though they were not part of the *varna* hierarchy, was affected by the artificial consensus which was a part of Hindu hegemony legitimised by the doctrine of *karma*.

Tribals are different from dalits because they were never treated as a part of the Hindu social order. As they had their own independent social system, tribals did not face social exclusion as dalits did. They also did not suffer the same type of atrocities as suffered by dalits. Apart from their geographical location in the hilly or forested terrain, tribals also differed from dalits in political, religious, economic and psychological aspects. These aspects have kept them away from the Hindu hegemony in terms of their status in the caste hierarchy, occupation, commensality, etc. Furthermore, this differentiation has resulted in a different type of construction of consciousness among tribals and, hence, they revolted a number of times in the past. That is why we have not included them in the present definition of dalits.

Women have also been excluded from our definition of dalits. The reasons being, a woman in Indian society, however exploited, does not constitute a monolithic whole. There is differentiation of women on caste and class lines. If we take women belonging to the castes located in the upper echelons of the caste hierarchy then we find their attitude towards dalits is same as that of their male counterparts. They practise untouchability in the same manner, as any caste Hindu male would do. How then can we differentiate caste Hindu women from their men and include them under dalits? Thus, in this paper, the term dalit has been used exclusively for ex-untouchables.

😕 🥴 🥫 Situating Dalits in Indian Society: The Book View 🛫 😥 served from the spent and coffmat sphores have in proceeding in Let) us observe how ambiguous the position of dalits is in the Hindu social order. To begin with, the caste system has emerged from the varna social order described in the Hindu scriptures. The Hindu social-order, according to the scared texts, comprises of Varnasharma Dharma along with the four-fold varna division in the society. Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra (ord fort) marriage horrows in the s social explicit of at extinationality to so exponency first has In Rigveda .! three classes of society are frequently mentioned, and named Brahma, Kshatra, and Visha It is only in one of the later hymns, the celebrated Purusukta, that a reference has been made to four orders of society as emanating from the sacrifice of the Primeyal Being The names of those four orders are given there as Brahmana, Rajanya, Vaishya, and Shiidra Ghurey 1979 44) M.N. Srinivas writes, and a ret mine in comment. whom is the mine in the state of t in the Rigvedic hymn Purusukta, the four varna or orders formed the limbs of primeval man (Purusha), who was victim in the divine sacrifice which produced the cosmos The Brahmins emerged from his mouth, the Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaishyas from his thighs and Shudras from the feet The untouchable eastes find no mention in the hymn (1985-150-51) of the on suffer the easily upon at at collessing singlifed or united it each thing ·Similarly; Louis Dumont argues; had a hard and a soft soutanness and ליניים או דים ה אלווד זו מושל בל דנופנו ענק אריום מוב מוני אווין ואין אוזומן כזל There is in India: a hierarchy other? than that of the pure and the impure, namely, the traditional hierarchy of the four varnas, colours or estates; whereby four categories are distinguished the highest is that of the Brahmans, or priests, below them the Kshatriyas, or warriors, then the Vaishyas, in modern usage mainly merchants, and finally the Shudras, the servants or have-nots. There is in actual fact a fifth category, the untouchables, who are left outside the classification (1999 66-67)

Thus, it can be observed from the above that, though on the basis of sacred texts the founding fathers of Indian Sociology recognised only four varias in Hindu social order, the presence of dalits (untouchables) as the 'fifth category,' of the Hindu social order is not denied The same sociologists, however, have denied the existence of the fifth varia in the Hindu social order with the help of the same sacred texts. In this regard, Dumont has categorically stated, 'First and foremost, these texts were to mask the emergence, the factual accretion of a fifth category, the untouchables, each emulating the others in proclaiming that 'there is no fifth' (Ibid 68) So, from where has this metaphor has come in the

sociological vogue? Has it been carved out for the convenience of the researchers or the dominant sections of the Indian society?

sacred texts, but they have also been assigned their duties or jobs (dharma) as well For example; in the hymns of the Rigveda; the job of the Brahmin varna was to read and write, teach and preach, offer and officiate sacrifices. The Brahmins were obliged by this tradition to undergo a life of study, mediation, and penetration into the mysteries of God and dharma (Mathur 1991 68). The occupation the Kshatriyas, must have consisted in administrative and military duties. In the prayer for the prosperity of Kshatriya, he is said to be an archer and good chariot-fighter. (Ghurey 1979 48) The Vaishya formed the third order and was supposed to be a trader. The Shudra,

It seems the class represented domestic servants, approximating very nearly to the position of slaves. The Shudra is described as the servant of another, to be expelled at will, and to be slain at will. The Panch-vimsha Brahmana defines this position still more precisely when it declares that the Shudra, even if he be prosperous, cannot be but a servant of another, washing his superior's feet being his main business. The "Shatapatha Brahmana goes to the length of declaring that the Shudra is untruth itself (Ibid 50-51)

L'Apart form the aforesaid varnas and the duties assigned to them, except for the dalits, the book view of caste system also prescribed an elaborate arrangement of the various socioeconomic, political and religious activities by an individual to be performed in various stages of his life. These stages are named as ashramas, which are four in number brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha, and sanyasa The male members of the Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaishya varnas pass through these four stages in their life. The first ashrama is called brahmacharya ashrama, from which the fourth varna, namely, Shudra, and the women of the first three varnas were barred. It is to be noted that this ashrama is very important of all the ashrama in individual silife. Sudhir Kakar (1982 8-9) has eloquently portrayed its importance

brahmacharya, in which the school child, growing into youth, learned the basic skills relevant to his future adult working role while he lived together with other students and the guru. The myriad duties prescribed for this stage can be subsumed under two headings. (a) the social-importance placed on the learning of skills, and (b) the student's unquestioning devotion to the guru's person.

Furthermore,

The task the *brahmacharya* stage lies in the knowing of one's *dharma*, which would consist in acquiring the skills in one's caste and in winning an identity based on a caste identity and the identification with and the emulation of the guru. The strength issuing from this stage would then correspond to 'competence' and 'fidelity'

After this, comes the second ashrama that is, garhasthya ashram

In the Hindu view it is this stage that 'man's meanings' (purusarthas) besides dharma, that is, artha (material gratification) and kama (sensual-sexual gratification), flower and to be enjoyed. The Hindu view thus also hints at the 'intimacy' based on shared work as well as on sensuality and procreation.

The third stage or ashrama is vanaprastha (a gradual withdrawal without loosening of responsibility) In the last asharma, that is, Sanyasa (renunciation), it is expected from the individuals that they practise physical separation from all worldly and personal ties. In this manner, we see the elaborate arrangement which exists in the holy texts of the Hindus on the basis of which the caste system has emerged

From the above discussion, the following queries emerge, proving the ambiguous position of dalits in the Hindu social order First, even if we believe the sacred texts, to which the origin of caste is traced, from where does the metaphor of the fifth *varna* originate? Second, accepting that there is a fifth *varna*, what will be its *dharma* and which *ashramas* can its members follow? No convincing and objective explanation is given by Indian sociologists, and yet they treat dalits as part and parcel of the Hindu social order Is the inclusion of dalits in the Hindu social order only an academic or political exercise, or there is any sociological explanation for this?

Sociological Literature and Dalit identity

Indian sociology is more than a century old, but even today Indian sociologists have not been able to evolve a politically correct language to describe the dalits. Along with other social scientists, they use the same stigmatised identities like 'lower castes', 'exterior castes', 'untouchables', 'Harijans', etc. for dalits. Against this, they use a refined language for the castes located higher in the caste hierarchy 'upper castes', 'twiceborn', etc. The language used is partisan, and it stigmatises dalits. When questioned, Indian sociologists have argued that they do it for objectivity

The objective reality, however, is different and dalits have been addressed by different nomenclatures at the grassroots. Chandalas, Hinajatians, Avarnas, Asprashya, Antyajas, Achhuts, Pariahs, Namsudras, Panchamas (the fifth class or category), etc. These social identities had stigma, segregation and contempt writ large. Had Indian sociologists been objective they should have used these terms in referring to dalits.

Another objective reality about the nomenclature of dalits is that they were also known by their traditional nomenclatures in the local regions Chamar, Pasi, Dhobi, Chakkliyar, etc. However, Indian sociologists do not use the exact name of the dalit castes. Instead, for their convenience, they have propagated a generalised and common identity of dalits in the discipline. In this regard, Indian sociologists have also not revealed the fact that dalits have been uncomfortable with these identities. With the gradual awakening for self-respect among them, dalits have intensified their hatred against these names, and consequently they protested for a change in their caste names. To assert their aboriginal lineage they adopted the appellations of Adi-Hindu, Adi-Dravida, Adi-Andhra, Adi-Karnataka, etc. towards the close of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Indian sociologists failed to record efforts of various actors to give different nomenclature For instance, the term 'depressed classes' was used for these castes either by the missionaries or the social reformers The term found its way in the Government officialese sometimes in the nineteenth century, but it gained currency in official usage only towards the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century (Gupta 1985 7-8) However, the identity of the depressed classes or the untouchables as a depressed class could not last long. The untouchables or depressed classes led by BR Ambedkar, Babu Khem Chand, MC Rajah and R Srinivasan asserted that the term 'depressed classes' should be categorically defined, as a few other non-dviia caste Hindus were also being identified under that nomenclature Later. Ambedkar refuted this identity for the untouchables and urged, 'We would like to point out that the existing nomenclature of Depressed Classes is objected to by members of the Depressed Classes who have given thought to it and also by the outsider who take interest in them It is degrading and contemptuous' (Ibid 26) Ambedkar suggested five alternatives - the 'non-caste Hindus', the 'Protestant Hindus', the 'non-conformist Hindus', the 'Excluded Castes,' and the 'Exterior Castes' - to be considered for the selection of a better denomination for the untouchable communities (*Ibid*)

Another identity of dalits, in the beginning of the 1930s, which is still commonly used to identify the untouchable castes, was 'Harijan' It is a general misconception that the term 'Harijan' was coined by

Mahatma Gandhi In fact, it was originally used by Narsinha Mehta, a Gujarati poet-saint of the *Bhakti* tradition in the medieval period (*Ibid* 30). Gandhi himself clarified this in one of the issues of the weekly *Haryan* He argued that,

It is not a name of my coining Some years ago, several untouchable correspondents complained that I used the word 'Asprishya' in the pages of Navjivan 'Asprishya' means literally untouchable I then invited them to suggest a better name, and one of the 'untouchable' correspondents suggested the adoption of the name 'Harijan', on the strength of its having been used by the first known poet-saint of Gujarat (Harijan, 7 February 1933 7)

The members of the untouchable castes, especially the educated and politically conscious ones, did not accept the identity of 'Harijan' They wondered how this nomenclature could solve their real problems Till date, the term is hated and despised by dalits Owen M. Lynch has stated that 'Literally the word means "child of god" but figuratively its connotations are quite different. My Jatav informants showed dislike — at times an intense dislike — for the word. They felt, it connoted the idea of being a bastard and also brought to mind patronising upper-caste benevolence' (1974-128)

The then government carved a new identity – the 'Scheduled Castes' - for the untouchable castes as these were put in a Schedule for the purpose of providing them constitutional safeguards under the new Constitution of the British Government in India (1937) Although this term has been used as a nomenclature in the present Constitution of India, it is not explicitly defined Apparently, the members of the erstwhile untouchable castes have not had much problem with their given identity of 'Scheduled Castes' However, in the 1970s, a new identity, namely, dalit was asserted by them In the mid-1970s, again, the dalit leaders coined a new identity in the name of 'Bahujan' with the emergence of Backward and Minorities Communities Employees' Federation (BAMCEF) Thus, there has been a long movement by the dalits for a dignified identity, yet, Indian sociologists have only used the stigmatised social identities for referring to dalits. Is it a case of value neutrality or bias? While the world over there has been a movement to consciously use politically correct terminology to describe the erstwhile-stigmatised collectivities - Negroes are now called as blacks, prostitutes, referred as to sex workers, the handicapped, as physically challenged, the aged, as senior citizens - Indian sociology is still stuck with the stigmatised identities for dalits. It is well known that the construction of terminology depicts the attitude of the people towards the stigmatised collectivities A positive identity or value-neutral identity in place of a negative identity helps to relate to people with stigmatised collectivity on a more cordial plain. Hence, there is need to carve out a neutral term for the dalits

Dearth of Sociological Literature on the Social Exclusion of Dalits

As far as the issue of social exclusion of dalits is concerned, Indian sociologists have touched it only in a descriptive manner. Excepting a few (for example, Commen 2001), they have tried to define broadly how dalits have been categorised or, at the most, what occupation they perform, etc. (see, for example, Ghurey 1979 306-36). The sociological literature is silent on the number of movements launched by dalits for their independent status from the Hindu social order. Adi-Hindu, Adi-Dravida, Adi-Andhra, Adi-Karnataka, Ad-Dharm movements come under this category. The sociological literature does not discuss the religious conversion of dalits to Islam and Sikhism in the medieval period and to Christianity in the modern period. The lack of literature on this theme hides the reality and the causes of conversion of the dalits, on the one hand, and the intensity of exploitation of dalits at the hands of the caste Hindus, on the other

It is well known that dalits have their own vibrant culture and literature They have their own folk songs, and dance and art forms But all this has been blacked out by the caste-Hindu media, intelligentsia and academia Oommen is eloquent on this

There has been a cognitive blackout in Indian social science, until recently, as far as knowledge regarding the life-world of dalutbahujans. The fact the lifestyles of upper castes and dalutbahujans vary dramatically in terms of food habits, worship patterns or gender relations is tacitly acknowledged. But, instead of squarely recognising these variations and explaining why they exist, the dominant tendency in Indian sociology, at least until recently, has been to suggest that the dalutbahujans are abandoning their way, of life in favour of the lifestyles of caste Hindus. This is what sanskritisation is all about. In this perspective, not only the norms and values of caste Hindus are privileged, but they are also christened as norm-setters and value-givers for the society as a whole Conversely, the norms and values of dalutbahujans are knocked out, ignored, stigmatised and delegitimised (2001 21)

Gauri Viswanathan writes, San San Art 188

The privileging of Gandhi as an emblem of non-partisan feeling has as its inverse, the demonisation of Ambedkar as a purveyor of sectarian politics. The view that 'the national hagiography in India has rarely conceded a

space for Ambedkar alongside Gandhi' is borne out by amazing excision of Ambedkar from several well-known literary works about untouchability (2001 220)

Similarly, the role played by dalits in the freedom movement is also blacked out Ranjit Guha notes,

The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism – colonialist elitism and bourgeois nationalist elitism. Both these varieties of elitism share the prejudice that the making of the Indian nation and the development of the consciousness – nationalism – which informed this process were exclusively elite achievement (1982 1).

Furthermore, many studies conducted by Indian sociologists in the post-Independence period have tried to investigate whether constitutional measures have served to reduce the social disabilities and social discrimination of dalits or not (see Béteille 1969, Abbasayulu 1978, Malik 1979) There has not been any quantitative or qualitative analysis of the processes of exclusion and deprivation of dalits in Indian society, in general, and Hindu social order, in particular They have failed to record the impact of social, economic and political exploitation on the dalit communities How has it resulted in loss of cultural capital and, hence, the subjugation of dalits generation after generation? Similarly, the mainstream sociologists have failed to evaluate the exclusion of dalits from the modern institutions of democracy such as legislatures, bureaucracy, judiciary, media, etc It has been accepted by many sociologists that these institutions have deep anchoring in the traditional social structure of Indian society, that is, the caste system (Singh 1994 129-58) Yet sociologists have failed to accept that these institutions, which were supposed to function on the universalistic principles, are influenced by particularistic values of caste The monopolisation of institutions of governance by the caste Hindus and the marginalisation of dalits from these institutions is testimony to the fact that there is discrimination against dalits in these institutions. Otherwise, dalits would not have been substantially under-represented in the higher echelons of the institution of governance None of this has caught the imagination of the mainstream Indian sociologists Similarly, the evaluation of the role of caste in the modern market and media has not attracted the attention of mainstream sociologists

Ridicule as a Form of Exclusion

Indian sociologists have not been able to note the established dictums and sayings for ridiculing dalits. These ridicules emanate from religious

texts and also from the psyche of the common masses For Instance, look at *Ramcahrıtmans*, one of the most cherished and widely read sacred texts of Hindus In it, Acharya Tulsidas writes

Shudra, ganvar, dhor, pashu, narı Yah sab taran ke adhıkarı (Shudras, villagers, ill-mannered, anımals, women All of them need a beating)

Pujahun Vipra sheell gun gyan hina,
Shudra na gun gyan param praveena
(A Brahmin is worship-able even though he is devoid of all qualities,
A Shudra is not, even though he possesses all the qualities)

It should be noted here that, though these couplets referred to Shudras, who were part of the *varna* hierarchy, in contemporary society these are used for dalits

There are other sayings ridiculing dalits which have become a part of the common parlance Let us take the case of dalit women

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Bitiya Chamar ki, nam Rajraniya! (Daughter of Chamar with the name of Rajrani [chief queen]!)
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The hidden meaning of this saying is that a *Chamar* cannot even name his daughter sophisticatedly. So stigmatic is the meaning of this saying that it is often used by the caste Hindus to ridicule their own girls who behave a bit extrovertly Similarly,

Chappal par Chamain chale, sandal par Dhobiniya, Hai mor Rama badal gail duniya (The Chamarin [the Chamar woman] walks in slippers, the Dhobinya [the washerwoman] in sandals, Oh my Rama! The world has changed)

This means that the dalit women should not wear even slippers, because traditionally she was not allowed to do so, and, if she has started doing so, the times have changed

Kya chori Cahmari karte ho? (Do you practise theft and Chamari?)

Humko chor Chmar mat samajho!
(Do not mistake me for thief or Chamar!)

In both these cases, the meaning of 'theft' and 'thief' is clear, but how can we explain the meaning of Chamari and Chamar It can only be said that these terms have a latent meaning. These are caste names which are self-explanatory because of the stigma and contempt attached to them. The terms have specific meaning for their users in a particular geographical locale. The aforesaid example is from northern India, I am sure, however, that each geographical territory has its own caste names for the dalit communities and sayings based on them. Today, these caste names have become terms of abuse themselves, and are frequently used by the caste. Hindus even to ridicule their own caste fellows. The general ridicule can go to any length, for example, in one saying the Chamar has been compared with Jackal

Chamar styar bade hoshstyar,
Jahan loot pare wahan toot pare,
Jahan mar pare wahan bhag pare
(Chamar and jackal are very clever
Where there is loot, they pounce there,
Where there is beating, they run away)

Similarly, dalits have been identified with the 'black' and Brahmins with 'white' That is, if a Chamar has fair skin, and a Brahman, dark skin, their origin is doubtful and they cannot be trusted

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Karıya Bahmın gor Chamar
Inke sanghe na utre par
(A dark Brahmın and a fair Chamar cannot be trusted)
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European and American sociologists have tried to lay their hand on these issues. However, their studies have not been accepted as objective Yogendra Singh writes,

The ideology in the interpretation of Indian society and its institutions by the colonial scholars can be seen in the way they defined these institutions and in the methods they employed to study them. The contribution [they] made [were] not entirely free from conscious or unconscious partiality in the portrayal of social reality (1986 3)

Similarly, the studies on the said issues by the sociologists hailing from dalit background have also been termed as too vindictive

Lack of Recognition for Dalit Labour

It is difficult to understand why Indian sociologists have failed to analyse and record the contributions made by dalits. Though suppressed and exploited, dalits have played a constructive role in the smooth running of Indian society, economy and polity. The contribution made by the dalit woman as a midwife in helping millions of women to deliver their children has never been evaluated, neither as a moral contribution to the humanity nor as a part of the indigenous knowledge system Similarly, the mainstream sociologists have never registered the contribution of the gravedigger or Dom who helps light the funeral pyre, or that of dalit men who work as landless labourers in fields and in industries Not only was their labour blacked out, but also the technology and aesthetics involved in their labour was not registered. For instance, is their any technique to skin the dead animal and then carve out smooth and shining leather to prepare a pair of shoes, or it happens without it? Lest it be misunderstood, I am not here trying to eulogise or patronise the stigmatised and hazardous occupations performed by the dalits. On the contrary, my attempt here is only to record the contributions of dalits in their different roles The absence of recognition of the contributions made by dalits for the development of Indian society has a direct bearing on their stigmatisation they are projected as dirty, drunkard, devoid of any merit, beasts of burden, not to be trusted, and so on

Can Dalit Literature Rescue?

When there is total absence of facts and figures regarding dalits in the sociological literature, how can we compensate the loss? Can we take the help of dalit literature? Dalit literature includes every style of writing by the dalits – the creative literature, the political and ideological writings, etc. From the couplet of Rai Das (or Ravi Das), fifteenth century saint-poet, and nineteenth century Adi-Hindu and Adi-Dravida leaders, foreign and English-educated Ambedkar to contemporary semi-literate and literate vernacular language dalit writers, dalits are expressing themselves in every style poetry, prose, plays, autobiographies, novels, political and ideological writings, and even in the form of institutional research material. These writings are sociological in the sense that they have emerged out of existential and experiential realities of dalits Moreover, it has its own historicity, continuity and dynamism and, therefore, it has been changing its nature and scope with the changes in the socio-political conditions in the country and of dalits.

Specifically, the literary writings in the contemporary dalit literature emerged in Maharashtra in the 1960s under the influence of Ambedkar's social and political philosophy (Wankhade 1992: 315) So powerful has been the tradition of dalit literature that it has assumed the shape of an all-India movement. This movement is carried forward by small weekly,

fortnightly, monthly, or annual journals, and magazines, and the newspapers published in different languages. Moreover, a rich oral tradition of this literature can be heard at different conferences and street meetings specially organised to mark the birth/death anniversaries of dalit social reformers and saint-poets. As dalit writings have emerged from the sufferings and exclusion faced by dalits in different regions of the country and demand liberation from the same, there is a sense of unity and purpose in them. A significant issue that has been raised by the dalit literature is regarding the social exclusion of dalits in the economic, political and social fields. It has also raised the issue of qualitative and quantitative impact of the deprivation and exclusion on dalits and the contribution made by dalits to the smooth running of Indian society, polity and economy

Thomas Khun (1970) has argued that revolution in scientific know-ledge comes about not through the accumulation of data alone, but through a change in the paradigm when the framework of explanation is altered or a new set of questions is posed. In this context, we can locate dalit writers as changing the paradigm and raising new hypothesis about their existential and experiential realties in their writings. This has two implications for sociology in India. First, there has emerged a conflict between the perception of dalit writers and the mainstream Indian sociologists on a number of conceptual categories. The dalit writers have been rejecting the explanations given by the mainstream Indian sociologists about the permanent structures of Indian society such as caste, village, etc. (Ambedkar 1979 and 1989–19-26)

Second, the dalit literature is arguing that the western concepts which have been used by the mainstream Indian sociologists are not appropriate or adequate to analyse the collectivity 'dalits' For instance, the class concept has been used to study the poverty of the people in general, and dalits in particular The concept of class is related to the economic status of individuals But it is difficult to compare the social status of a poor Brahmin and a poor dalit It can be easily argued that the poor of the upper castes and the so-called lower castes are not the same The causes of poverty of dalits and of the upper castes are different, as are their relationship with other groups For, a penury-stricken Brahmin begs and blesses the donor On the contrary, a cobbler who polishes shoes with his labour is treated with contempt, and usually people throw money at him Likewise, the richest industrialist goes and bows at the feet of a Brahmin of Kashı or Harıdwar On the other hand, the Rajput or Kshtrıya landowner will never plough his land, even though he is economically broke. or else he will loose his caste Yes, now with the advent of tractors, things have become different, but how many Kshatriyas can afford to

have tractors Similarly, the concept of sanskritisation has also been rejected as a process of imitation of the caste Hindus. Dalits argue that there is nothing to imitate in the caste Hindus, after all, every body wants to lead a hygienic life, and leading a hygienic life cannot be anybody's imitation. On the contrary, dalits have been asserting their identity and arguing, 'they are proud to be dalits'

Therefore, today, the dalit literature can be used by sociologists to understand the dalit society and culture. Select readings from this growing body of literature could be introduced in sociology curriculum. However, mere introduction of the literature will not suffice, it must be ensured that these readings are taught by the teachers and that questions are also asked in examination. Students should also be encouraged to take up research on topics related to dalits. Researches from the locale where dalits live will contribute in the development of authentic literature about dalits. Last, but not the least, a separate branch of sociology — 'sociology of dalits'—should be introduced in different universities and institutions of higher learning.

The Human Distress Index for Dalits

It can be safely argued that because of neglect by Indian sociologists of the above-discussed issues of dalits, they have failed to evolve a strategy to measure the social exclusion of dalits in Indian society Therefore, it is pertinent to evolve a comprehensive concept which can measure the social exclusion of dalits. It is in this context we have tried to evolve a 'Human Distress Index' (HDI) which can include a number of structural and cultural elements of the lives of dalits. For instance, we can include the atrocities committed on dalits by the caste Hindus, because their effects are qualitatively different from the general types of atrocities suffered by others There are many types and causes of atrocities on dalits They include murder, rape of dalit women, arson, taunts, ridicule, forced labour, etc., and their basis can range from refusal of forced labour by dalits to the assertion of their legitimate rights by them. In fact, denial to work by dalits on the whims and fancies of caste Hindus is the root cause of most of the atrocities on dalits. This obliquely emphasises the contribution made by dalit labour in running the Indian economy

Similarly, in this context, one can also evaluate the atrocities committed on dalits in the form of rape of their women by the caste-Hindu men. Rape is a heinous crime against any women, but rape of dalit women is qualitatively different. It cannot be treated just a sexual violation of a woman. Since time immemorial, the caste atrocities on dalits by the caste Hindus are often directed via dalit women. In a normal

struggle with the dalits, the castes located higher up in the hierarchy try to teach a lesson to the dalits by assaulting their women. Thereby, the whole community is terrorised. The process of assault on dalit women assumes the nature of caste atrocity because had it been just a rape the victims would have been left alone. But it has been reported in many cases that the upper-caste men deliberately desecrate the private parts of dalit women to settle their score with their male counterparts. Therefore, the point which I am trying to make here is that the atrocities on dalits have social structural basis of caste prejudice.

We can also include in HDI the hazardous and unhygienic occupations performed by them on the basis of their severity. The cleaning of human excreta and carrying it on head is most hazardous and unhygienic of all occupations. The third aspect of HDI will be the practice of untouchability, which includes the interactional pattern of dalits with the caste Hindus. The fourth and the fifth items of HDI are economic and political exclusions. Hence, atrocities, hazardous and unhygienic occupation, practice of untouchability, and economic and political exclusions form the hierarchy of social exclusion to be included in HDI (see Appendix I). This hierarchy is constructed keeping the significance of self-respect and life as the basis of the life of dalits. That is why the rape of dalit women has been given the highest value. Along with these, we have to include the role played by religion in providing legitimacy to the social exclusion of dalits and the role of internal oppressor of dalits. With the help of HDI we can measure the social exclusion of dalits effectively.

Appendix I: Human Distress Index

Nature of Exclusion	Value
A Social Exclusion	
1 Atrocities	
a) Rape	10
b) Murder	4
c) Grievous hurt	2
d) Arson/loot	2
e) Ridicule	2
2 Practice of untouchability	
a) Acceptance of food	2
b) Acceptance of water	2
c) Sitting beside/together	2
d) Entry into house	2
e) Entry into kitchen	2
3 Hazardous occupations	
a) Cleaning human excreta	5
b) Removing carcasses	3
c) Removing Corpuses/Digging of graveyard	2
d) Midwifery role of dalit women	2
e) Butchery/piggery	2
f) Cleaning of soiled clothes	1
B Economic exclusion	5
C Political exclusion	5
D Religious legitimisation of exclusion	10
E Internal oppressor in the caste	5

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Globalisation and the Besieged Nation: The Effects of Collective Violence on Sociological and Anthropological Research in Post-colonial Sri Lanka

Jani de Silva

Introduction

Although a coherent policy on sociological research has never been a priority of post-colonial Sri Lankan budgets, the transfer of power shaped the sociological debate in the years to come One of the first tasks of the new government was to set up the Kandyan Peasantry Commission (Government of Ceylon 1951). This Commission was required to look into the problems of the Kandyan peasantry such as the emergence of 'landlessness', fractured holdings, boundary disputes, indebtedness and overpopulation, all of which were deemed to be the product of British colonial land policy. The Commission report, in 1952, set the tone for state policy towards the peasant agrarian sector in the next few decades. This involved vast infrastructural investments in irrigated-land-colonisation schemes in the arid Dry Zone, aimed at easing population pressures on the fertile Kandyan regions or the Wet Zone.

Sociological research during this period was also mainly preoccupied with the troubled operation and problematic impact of these innovative but somewhat unrealistic schemes Such a concern is reflected in two landmark publications by the University of Ceylon Press Board in the late-1950s The first, Sinhala Social Organisation by Ralph Pieris (1956) was perhaps the first critical sociological inquiry into issues of caste and class in pre-colonial Sinhala society. However, it was the Disintegrating Village (1957) which was to shape the trends in sociological research in the next decade In many ways then, the Disintegrating Village - ironically compiled by two Tamil scholars - somehow captured the profound anxieties of the Sinhala intelligentsia, of the destruction wrought by British colonialism of their way of life, symbolised by the plight of the Kandyan peasantry Gananath Obeyesekere's Land Tenure in Village Ceylon (1967) also built on images of disintegration and loss Such publications augured the emergence of a substantial literature over the years on issues such as changing production relations in the countryside and the re-emergence of social class in the new settlement schemes which continued well into the 1980s

However, by the mid-1960s, radical changes had taken place. The Sinhala language, spoken by approximately 69 percent of the population

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- largely resident in the South, Central and North-Central regions of the island - had displaced English as the official language This, of course, marginalised non-Sinhala-speaking professionals and educationists and led to the flight of more liberal-minded scholars to academia in the West This, in turn, diminished the intellectual climate in the local universities At the same time, an acute terms-of-trade crisis forced the total closure of the economy. All in all, a period of cultural introspection had ensued

Scholars at the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Ceylon responded to these developments with the *Ceylon Studies Seminar* in 1968. Originally a forum to discuss political developments such as the 'Sinhalisation' of state and society and the implications for majority-minority relations, this became, as Michael Roberts (1997 xv) subsequently observed, the principal academic space for the discussion of Sri Lankan issues Several papers presented at this forum were published in the *Modern Ceylon Studies Series* launched in 1970, and which survived until 1975/76.

The 1980s saw changes that were even more dramatic The economy was opened-up in 1978. As happened elsewhere in the post-colonial world, the 'new' globalisation of the late-1970s swept across the cultural landscape in myriad forms (see Appadurai 1996). The electronic media arrived. Free Trade Zones emerged everywhere. Tourist arrival rates climbed higher every year. A consumption boom seemed to transpire. All these developments were to colour notions of ethnic identity and spawn terrors of the vitiation of collective identity among the gatekeepers of the nation, among both the Sinhala- and Tamil-speaking intelligentsia. Issues of post-coloniality now appeared to be subsumed under fears of a new kind of cultural onslaught.

The liberalisation of the economy, however, also enabled the setting up of a number of privately funded research organisations, many of which were able to respond vigorously to the critical challenges of the next two decades. If the *Ceylon Studies Seminar* was the product of a period of cultural introspection, the academic publications of the 1980s and 1990s were very much motivated by and responses to cultural influxes from without

Consequently, key events which occurred during this decade, such as the anti-Tamil pogrom of 1983 which led to the open militarisation of the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic conflict and the second uprising of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) (1987-90) were played out against the backdrop of advancing waves of globalisation. The 1980s was perhaps the bloodiest decade in documented Sri Lankan history. The 1990s saw the second and third anti-Tamil wars played out across the largely Tamil-speaking North and East.

This paper will assess the contribution of some key research organisations during 1979-2000. For reasons of space, it will focus on four such centres the Marga Institute, the Social Scientists Association (SSA), the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), and the Women's Education and Research Centre (WERC), all of which were - at least, initially - committed to non-policy-oriented research. It will examine the extent to which these organisations engaged with - or failed to address - issues of state terror as well as that of non-state actors. It will look at the empirical and methodological insights they brought into issues of collective identity in Sri Lanka, including class, gender, caste, ethnic and national identity, as well as issues such as globalisation and bodily violence Finally, it will look at the way in which the new research organisations were able to deploy new methodological approaches such as post-structuralism, post-modernism, the shift of focus on to the body, embodiment and performance, and assess the utility of such approaches to Sri Lankan sociological and anthropological realities

The 1970s: The 'Sinhalisation' of Politics and Society, and Cultural Introspection

Against the violence of the next two decades, the 1970s seemed positively serene But it was a troubled period, marked by a mass uprising in the Sinhala-speaking South and simmering labour unrest. The United Left Front (ULF) coalition-in-power construed the uprising as a sign of the growing alienation of landless Sinhala peasants Consequently, the ULF, which included the Marxist parties, embarked on a — somewhat controversial — land-reform programme, including the mass nationalisation of the entire plantation sector Redistribution, on the other hand, was plagued with incessant problems. All these developments then, brought about a renewed focus on issues of social class and capital-labour relations.

In the realm of sociological research, two organisations emerged The Marga Institute was set up in the early-1970s to focus on developmental issues, and the Social Scientists Association (SSA), which was largely comprised of academics from the Peradeniya, Colombo and Jaffna universities, emerged in the late-1970s While the SSA conducted a series of seminars on issues of national identity, these emerged in published form only in the 1980s, when the political climate had been radically transformed Marga's first significant publication came in 1979. This was a collection of papers presented at successive Ceylon Studies Seminars compiled under the title Collective Identities, Nationalisms and Protest in Modern Sri Lanka, edited by Michael Roberts (1979)

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Collective Identities was an interesting volume in that, in a political and intellectual climate intensely preoccupied with issues of social class and the distribution of resources such as land, it explored questions of national identity and attempted to link the developments of the 1950s and 1960s with nationalist and protest movements originating in colonial times

In Collective Identities, the contributors to the volume are still essentially optimistic about the project of the 'nation' Many of them still appeared to feel that the 'nation' could incorporate a plurality of ethnicities, including Sinhala, Tamil, Moor, Malay and Burgher Here, 'nationalism' still held strong anti-colonial connotations, the enemy was the British, who divided and ruled, rather than the Sinhala majority government, which, it seemed to hope, would soon somehow perceive the error of its ways. Its basic critical thrust was still aimed at entities such as the missionary conversion, the Colonial Office, sundry Governors and Colonial Secretaries and British colonialism-at-large

For instance, K M de Silva's masterly piece on nineteenth century protest movements in the Kandyan regions, dismissed as irrelevant by the British, seeks to restore their weight in contemporary historiography He locates in them the roots of today's (Sinhala) nationalist movements In many ways, this essay is written in the mode popularised in the mid-1980s by the Subaltern Studies collective But, ironically, here the historiographer seeks to buttress the image of the nation with the achievements of its fragments! In the process, he imbues peasant groups with a 'Great Sinhala' consciousness of almost twentieth century post-colonial dimensions

Similarly, in his essay K N O Dharmadasa argues that the Tamil (Hindu) Nayakkar dynasty, which ruled the Kandyan kingdom in the late eighteen century, was acceptable to their Sinhala Buddhist subjects, so long as they showed respect to Buddhism and Buddhist institutions. Over the years, these monarchs did indeed overtly promote Buddhism, even though in some instances they continued to retain their personal commitment in Hindu deities. What was relevant was their public religious posture Gananath Obeyesekere, in his interesting essay, traces the 'vicissitudes' of Sinhala Buddhist identity through time

In methodological terms, though critical of the West European colonial projects, this posture is retained from a liberal-voluntarist — as opposed to a structuralist — view of the world Furthermore, all writers clearly strove to take a scholarly, 'impartial' and 'unbiased' approach to their material, they presented the 'true' picture, and this was the only possible 'truthful' interpretation of events, given the empirical 'facts' at their disposal However, ironically, and sometimes against the grain of

the writer's intention, essays such as those of Dharmadasa and Obeyese-kere do convey a sense of the contingency of identity, a theme which was already evolving in the West European theatre, with the emergence of post-structuralist notions of subject-identity

The great intellectual upheavals of the 1970s-1980s, thus, paved the way for the post-structuralist de-centring of the subject in western liberal thought. The idea of a unitary, rational subject or the Cartesian *cogito* as a discursive category was attacked from many directions — among others, through Barthes' semiotics, Derrida's deconstruction, Lacan's extension of Freudian psychoanalysis, and Foucault's theories of knowledge Subject-identity was now no longer seen to inhere in the subject, but as needing to be constructed. The subject must learn to 'speak', to 'create' herself/himself, self-realisation must be struggled for

The post-structuralist decentring of the subject becomes more explicable in the context of the post-War mass migrations from the colonies into the 'mother country' which changed the face of the metropolis forever It also set the conditions for the emergence of identity politics in the 1970s. In turn, identity politics shattered the great liberal myth of class as the final signifier of the post-Enlightenment persona. It began with the Black politics of the early-1970s. In the late-1970s gender politics emerged and, by the 1980s, the politics of sexuality or gay politics had arrived on the political agenda.

It is this simultaneity of identities of class, race, gender, sexuality and so on, says Moore (1994), which the post-structuralist notion of subjectivity aims to capture. It mirrors the fluidities of the postmodern world. In this project of self-construction, the face of the 'other' shifts according to the needs of the moment. Identity becomes a narrative, with every subject assuming a different subject-position within different discourses of class, race, gender, sexuality, and religion. In time, she says, alterity is internalised, the other arrives at the very heart of the self.

However, *Collective Identities* never really received the critical acclaim it deserved, for it was overtaken by events The 'new' globalisation of the 1980s, which transpired with the dramatic opening-up of the economy, was to shift the collective preoccupation with colonial indignities to new terrors of cultural influxes from without and which was to mark both Sinhala and Tamil identity in the next few decades

The 1980s: Economic Liberalisation; Influx of the Global; Ethnic Conflict and Mass Uprising

In Sri Lanka, the globalisation of the 1980s did not transpire in a vacuum. It arrived under the aegis of the conservative, pro-capital United

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National Party (UNP) The UNP's labour politics should in turn be seen against the background of the recurrent strikes which wracked the economy in the late-1970s under the United Left Front (ULF) coalition. The Marxist parties, who were junior partners in the ULF, traditionally enjoyed strong trade union support. It was in order to break this seemingly immutable vote bank that the leader of the UNP, J.R. Jayawardene built up his own Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya (JSS). The JSS, with its distinctive approach to labour relations, has been aptly characterised by Obeyesekere (1984—77) as a trade union without a working class ideology. Jayawardene on his part had always favoured open economic policies and the luring of foreign investment to 'kick-start' local industry. This required the setting up of Free Trade Zones (FTZs), which would be enclaves exempt from the reach of local labour legislation.

Consequently, Jayawardene's relations with non-UNP trade unions were always difficult. The low point of this relationship occurred in the General Strike of 1980, when the UNP government, with the help of JSS blacklegs, decided to lockout 80,000 workers. This set the tone for subsequent developments. Over the years, rather than the 'liberal' labour legislation in the rest of the island percolating down into the FTZs, as the UNP feared, the repressive labour regime of the FTZs was to colour relations across the rest of the economy and polity

Furthermore, on the electoral front, in the very first few years in power Jayawardene took extraordinary steps to contain the mainstream political opposition In 1978, he made himself President of Sri Lanka and brought in a new Presidential Constitution. In the next year, he set up a Presidential Commission which found the previous Premier and leader of the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), Mrs Bandaranaike, guilty of 'abuses of power' He proceeded to remove her civic rights. This shattered the SLFP, which continued to be plagued with leadership problems for the rest of the decade. After winning the first Presidential Elections in 1982, the UNP proceeded to massively rig the subsequent parliamentary elections (see Hewagama and Warnapale 1983) All these repressive developments paved the way for the terrible anti-Tamil roots of 1983, in which thousands died across the island. In this pogrom, where Sinhala 'mobs' were said to have attacked Tamil civilians, the active participation of members of the government and the open collusion of its armed forces with the 'mobs' have never been seriously denied.

This then was the political climate in which *Ethnicity and Social Change*, the first publication of the SSA emerged in 1984, first in English and subsequently in Sinhala and Tamil Like the Marga volume, this book was also the product of essays written in the late-1970, in this

instance for a seminar on 'Nationality Problems in Sri Lanka' organised by the SSA Thus, they were written in a radically different political and intellectual climate to that which obtained in the early-1980s.

In methodological terms, one significant difference from the Marga's Collective Identities though, stemmed from the fact that many of its contributors appeared to take a specifically Marxist position on nationalism and issues of national identity. Still, as much as the Marga scholars, contributors to Ethnicity and Social Change attempted to present what they felt was a 'correct' view of history. In their introduction, its editors hoped that the book would move at least some proponents of Sinhala and Tamil nationalism to look more closely at the 'myths, misinterpretations and misunderstandings that have nourished their ideologies' (Abeyesekere and Gunasinghe 1984). In this early work, contributors to the volume still appeared to believe that there was a 'reality' behind the myths of nationalism, which could be grasped by the scholar or intelligent, rational reader. Here 'myths' were seen as mere untruths, 'false' representations of a collective identity

Thus, in a climate where the Tamil community was openly victimised by the majority, Ethnicity and Social Change addressed itself to the task of dismantling the 'chosen people' myth of the Sinhalas This involved three elements (1) the 'Aryan' discourse, which extended Aryan and Dravidian linguistic divergences into racial differences among the Sinhalas and Tamils, (11) the 'Sihaladeepa' legend, which was built on the figure of Vijaya, the mythical offspring of a princess and lion (sinha) who immigrated from Bengal and fathered the Sinhala nation, or the 'people of the lion', and (111) the 'Dhammadeepa' narrative, which claims that it was the wish of the dying Buddha that Buddhism should flower in the isle of Sri Lanka for a thousand years, and that he sent his emissary Sakra to subdue the demonic forces which lived there and to prepare the island for the arrival of Vijaya and his entourage

The contributors to Ethnicity and Social Change, as much as the writers of Collective Identities, still seem to hold on to the somewhat romantic notion that nationalism could somehow be frozen in an anti-imperialist mode, without turning itself into an anti-minority force or 'vicarious' nationalisms Moreover, there seemed to be an expectation that ideally, the relations of production which stem from a colonial economy should create a bourgeoisie which would find its development constrained by the colonial power, and thus become anti-imperialist, as transpired in India This vision assumes, rather naively, that there is a basic similarity in pre-colonial capital accumulation processes, which creates a feudal aristocracy with sufficient resources to compete with the colonial powers. Alternately, it was expected that a local market of

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sufficient dimensions would evolve that could generate the enormous surpluses which allowed the emergence of a stable bourgeois, as again happened in the Indian instance

Consequently, many contributors expressed a sense of outrage at the failure of indigenous capitalist groups to live up to these expectations. Even the work of writers such as Jayawardene and Kuruppu, who purport to explore the reasons for the rise of anti-minority sentiments among a range of social groups, is suffused with consternation at the failure of middle-class leaders of the nationalist and labour movements. These groups are accused of 'communalism'. In the Sri Lankan context, 'communalism' held few religious connotations and simply implied intolerance of other ethnic groups

Furthermore, such emergent capitalists are assailed for their reluctance to support the extension of the electorate to non-propertied groups, which would of course shift the balance of power in the favour of such groups A sense of altruism appears to have been expected from this ad hoc group of local traders, entrepreneurs and landowners who after all accumulated their profits in the most exploitative way through the purchase of arrack 'rents' auctioned by the colonial government. This created a market for liquor where none existed before, and led to the debilitation and indebtedness of a range of already-disadvantaged social groups. Why then, notwithstanding Lenin's position on the 'enlightened' national bourgeoisie which they never became, would such groups now wish to give up these hard-won advantages?

The underlying thesis of Ethnicity and Social Change assumed that inter-ethnic violence was essentially a product of economic and structural factors. It argued that once these 'misconceptions' had been revealed, readers would be free to arrive at a 'correct' understanding of the situation. Its timing ensured that Ethnicity and Social Change — particularly its Sinhala version - made a serious impact on the Sinhala-reading public. This was manifested in the extended debate conducted through the pages of the pro-government tabloid Divaina, which continued for almost two years. Although, in general, none of the scholars who contributed to the volume involved themselves in the ensuing debate, readers at times critiqued as well as defended their arguments. At this point, the Divaina seemed to provide the Sinhala-speaking intelligents in with a public forum to express identity-anxieties.

In this debate, Sinhala contributors responding to the SSA volume appeared to be preoccupied with the need to rebuild their shattered image, perhaps irretrievably tarnished as perpetrators of the July 1983 anti-Tamil program Against the background of a bourgeoning national security state in the Sinhala-speaking South, and an escalating confronta-

tion between Tamil militants and the Sinhala-led armed forces in the North and East, some contributors to the *Divaina* debate now sketched a new ideological position which they described as the 'Jathika Chinthanaya'—literally '(Sinhala) national thought' As subsequently characterised by two SSA scholars, the Jathika Chinthanaya derived from a 'naive' grasp of the Sinhala past, of an agrarian society built around idyllic villages with their Buddhist temple and water reservoirs, where the Sinhala peasantry had relatively egalitarian access to land It ignored, they point out, oppressive caste and feudal structures (Abeyesekere 1987 and Gunasinghe III)

While being specifically anti-capitalist and anti-western, the *Jathika Chinthanaya* position was, of course, antagonistic towards Tamil-speaking groups. Thus, many readers contested the claim of the Tamil militants that there had been an independent Tamil kingdom in the North, on the grounds that whatever Tamil-speaking reigns there had been were merely client states of the South Indian Pandyans and the Vijayanagar Empire

This discourse ended with an attack on the reputed Sinhala historian K.M de Silva, who had argued previously that only four Sinhala kings had ever ruled the whole of the island. Not only were his conclusions questioned, but his competence as a historian was openly challenged. One contributor even accused 'our internationally renowned historians (such as K. M. de Silva) who may be happy that the white imperialists were able to control the whole of Sri Lanka while the Sinhala kings were unable to do so'. In this discourse, the enemy is no longer the Tamil other, as much as it is the Sinhala collaborators of the white imperialists. Moreover, the Marxists — as represented in *Ethnicity and Social Change*—were accused of inciting Tamil passions against the Sinhalas by distorting the facts and portraying Sinhala-Buddhists as the world's greatest barbarians.

On 19 September 1984, Newton Gunasinghe, an avowedly Marxist sociologist attached to the SSA, read a paper at a seminar with the title 'Do the Sinhalas have a Great Culture'? The paper expounded on the now much-critiqued – 'great' tradition and 'little' tradition concepts, locating – rather bravely – Sinhala culture in the latter category. This seminar had unexpected reverberations. By late-September, an editorial in the *Divaina* (30 September 1984) was interrogating the background of 'subversive' organisations such as the SSA and the Marga Institute. The editorial argued that intellectuals belonging to such organisations were two-faced – they assumed a mask of concern for social and cultural problems, while at the same time selling their academic talents – along with Sinhala culture – to the highest bidder. Furthermore, the organisa-

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tions which sponsored the kinds of seminars which produce volumes such as *Ethnicity and Social Change* were accused of weakening the Sinhalas, stripping them of their dignity and leaving them vulnerable to their enemies (see, for instance Sarath Wijesuriya in *Divaina Ibid*) Other readers went on to castigate anti-Sinhala Buddhist Marxists who traded their identity and culture for foreign funding (see letters by Vimal Wijesuriya and the Ven Kahawatte Ananda in *Divaina* 14 October 1984) Referring to W I Siriweera's article on the Dutugemunu-Elara conflict, one contributor, the Ven Kahawatte Ananda exclaimed that 'these social scientists are attacking the majority community with vigour, unmatched even by the Tamil Eelamists' (*Divaina* 5 November 1984) In this emergent discourse, the social scientists represent the evils of the global, such as foreign funding, deracination and indifference to their own history, all of which contribute towards the vitiation of the Sinhala nation

In response, a second volume – Facets of Ethnicity in Sri Lanka – was published in 1987 (Abeyesekere and Gunasinghe 1987) The first essay in this new volume, by the anthropologist Serena Tennakoon; proceeded to analyse the Divaina debate. The essays in this volume, however, were written against a different background to the previous volume. At this point, the largest Tamil militant organisation, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had already begun its attacks on other armed Tamil groups, in an all-out effort to gain control of the militant movement. Such fratricidal bloodletting generated enormous despair and consternation among Tamil scholars. Consequently, the second volume assumed a rather different tone, which was critical of the Tamil nationalist project, which some contributors saw as a mirror image of Sinhala nationalism and its 'chosen people' discourse

Moreover, while the first volume confined its major criticism to 'Great Sinhala' nationalism, in the second volume at least some essays attributed this nationalism to the UNP-controlled Sri Lankan state. In the increasingly repressive political climate, with rising levels of censorship, such a stance demanded enormous courage. In methodological terms, the editors of the second volume continued to stress the need for reason, and to deplore the fact that notions of rational development and growth, concepts of democracy, are all being swept away by the rising tide of chauvinist hysteria (Abeyesekere and Gunasinghe 1987 xi)

The multiplication of FTZs across the island and the harsh conditions under which their – largely female – labour forces struggled also created a new interest in issues of gender in a number of activist NGOs during this period. The SSA also initiated many discussions on issues of women's rights and feminism

The 1980s also saw the establishment of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) (in 1982), only to be confronted by the appalling events of July 1983. The magnitude of this event defined its research agenda for the next two decades. In the initial years, the ICES engaged in a series of national and cross-South Asia workshops on issues of ethnicity and gender. It was from a cross-national workshop held in Kathmandu in 1987 that its most successful publication — Mirrors of Violence (Das 1990) — emerged.

It was in the wake of the Kathmandu workshop that the violent July uprising of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (1987-90) transpired The uprising was crushed with extraordinary harshness. During 1988-1990, approximately 60,000 persons are thought to have died It was an event which shook the Sinhala intelligentsia as never before In this instance, Sinhala-speaking members of the Sri Lankan security forces slaughtered Sinhala insurgents in the South with as much conviction as they had decimated Tamil 'terrorists' in the North and East

Mirrors of Violence, which was finally published in 1990, echoed this profound sense of disquiet and dislocation. In her introduction, Veena Das, sociologist and editor of the volume, speaks of the 1980s as a period of deep uncertainties across South Asia. The clear-cut categories of the post-Enlightenment world-view such as rationality, order and urbanity no longer seemed valid.

Mirrors of Violence, marks an important step in that, for the first time, the state is no longer assumed to be a neutral actor in inter-ethnic conflict. Many contributors, in fact, specifically identify the regime-in-power/its armed forces as frequently complicit in the violence. Mirrors of Violence also takes a new conceptual turn in approaching ethnic conflict as an urban phenomenon played out on a range of sites across subcontinent. It sought to address the critical question of how 'communal' ideologies become transformed into violence

The essays in this volume take three different approaches to violence. The first looks at the way violence unfolds in the course of the riot and locates its operation within a particular structural context such as religion, politics or the individual unconscious. Ashish Nandy, for instance, does not see the urban riot as pathology inherent in civil society, but rather as a product of the nature of the state in these societies.

The second approach involves ethnographic explorations of particular riots, such as that against Tamils in Colombo or Sikhs in Delhi Here, the original essay by Michael Roberts which explores the Sinhala-Muslim riots of 1915 is outstanding. Roberts examines the notion of sacred space which was contravened by the British colonials. The

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Buddhist notion of sabda pooja (or worship with sound/music) involved much drumming and the blowing of conch shells, the loudness of which signified the intensity of the devotional act British attitudes to noise, as well as their notions of governmentality led to the formulation of the Police Ordinance of 1865. This Ordinance regulated the use of music and drumming by Sinhala Buddhists in front of mosques and churches. This led to a struggle on the part of Sinhala Buddhists to protect their sacred spaces from governmental claims. Roberts argues that drumming/music was generally tolerated by Sinhalas of all faiths until the British and the missionaries taught them to regard it as a 'disturbance' and a mark of disrespect. Thus, it was the interest of the colonial government in the regulation of time and space, including sacred space that invested these issues with special significance, creating new forms of conflict for which the British could then appear as neutral mediators.

The third approach attempts to capture the experience of survivors and their efforts to re-make their lives. Here, two papers by Das herself and by Kanapathipillai are particularly moving

Still, the study of violence must pose many hard questions. Does the author stand in a relationship of voyeur to the narratives of suffering, asks Das. According to her, there cannot be a single answer to the nature of this responsibility. Perhaps not Such narratives draw on the survivors' memory of a chain of events. Still, memory is never a simple, factual recitation of past event. Rather, it is an account of psychic experiences of specific events, filtered through metaphor, myth and idiom. Such ideological tools allow both the listener and the speaker to decipher the event reminisced, to decide who was the victim, who the perpetrator and who the spectator. Thus, the act of remembering is never entirely an individual or idiosyncratic exercise, but one that holds larger collective and cultural dimensions. Memory allows the speaker to construct a personal narrative which is at the same time a social commentary on her/his life and times. Thus, in many ways, the pain of the survivor stands as a metaphor for our collective pain.

While Mirrors of Violence did receive a measure of critical success across the subcontinent, it was not translated into the native languages and distributed within Sri Lanka. Thus, the extent to which it was able to inflect public discourse within Sri Lanka is limited to the reach of the English-speaking intelligentsia. The trenchant insights of many of its essays, if it had entered into public debate at the level Ethnicity and Social Change did, may have conveyed important experiences such as that of the survivor into the compass of would-be perpetrators. The perpetrator also stands as a metaphor for the angers within us

1990: Change of Political Regime and Recurrent Anti-Tamil Wars

The 1990s began violently with the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi (the then Prime Minister of India) by the LTTE. In May 1993, the second President of Sri Lanka and leader of the UNP Premadasa was dramatically assassinated by a suicide bomber, also thought to be a member of the LTTE. This last event threw the UNP govt into total disarray By August 1994, a massive electoral swing had swept the opposition SLFP into power, led this time by Bandaranaike's daughter, Chandrika Kumaratunga

This political development, in many ways, created a great deal of intellectual space. A number of interesting publications emerged The SSA brought out *Unmaking the Nation* (Jeganathan and Ismail 1995), a sequel to its earlier series, which, however, did not have the impact of the previous volumes – perhaps a symptom of the mood of the times

Unmaking the Nation, as its title implies, no longer seemed to hold out post-Enlightenment optimism about the nation. On the contrary, we suspect the nation, say its editors, somewhat dramatically. Here, perhaps lies its weakness. By the late-1990s, it was not possible to not suspect the nation. Still, as its editors protest, the contributors to this volume came together in the belief that the inclusive pretence of the nation must be exposed, that not just its inadequacies but its very superfluity must be called into question. Could it be that easy to deny the nation? Does the simple knowledge of its inadequacies and its fatuities free us from its thrall?

One essay, which stands out in this volume, is Maunaguru's piece on the incorporation of women into the Tamil nationalist project as armed warriors and suicide bombers. Maunaguru argues that, at a time when the extent of repression in the North had shattered much of civil society, the institution of 'motherhood' became a powerful site for dissent against the state which destroyed sons, brothers, husbands, and lovers. This created a space for the emergence of the Mother's Front in the North

One of the main issues which the Mother's Front organised around was, of course, the high incidence of rape of women An important part of their struggle also involved efforts to transform Tamil cultural attitudes towards victims of rape. It in this context that Maunaguru argues that, despite the LTTE's constant efforts to recruit women into the ranks of its armed cadres, their attitude to victims of rape seems ambiguous and contradictory. Thus, in the wake of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the LTTE continued to deny that their cadres had been involved. They suggested that the assassination may have been carried out as act of

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revenge by a woman who had been raped by the Indian Peace-Keeping Forces, which occupied the North and East of Sri Lanka during 1987-90.

Why, demands Maunaguru, did the LTTE suggest that the assassin was a raped woman? Because, she answers, a raped woman is seen to have lost her chastity, the ultimate virtue of a Tamil woman. She is thought to be not only violated, but polluted. She cannot regain her purity by any means except by negating her polluted body. The only way she can purify herself and simultaneously redeem the Tamil nation is by destroying herself. In this act of destruction, the targeted man exemplifies at one and the same time her rapist as well as the enemy of the Tamil nation. Maunaguru suggests that the LTTE implicitly co-opts this conventional Tamil discourse of chastity and pollution. It attempts to utilise women's vulnerability to rape by convincing raped women that their only redemption lies in dying for the nation

Maunaguru's insights fall in line with recent approaches to gender identity as a performance, rather than something which inheres in the subject. The subject acts out gender roles chosen from her/his cultural repertoire, in order to be 'more' feminine/masculine in the eyes of the group. In the years which followed, many spectacular assassinations were carried out by the LTTE suicide-bombers, both male and female, and Maunaguru's is perhaps the only insight we have at the moment into the complex motivations of such activists

This brings us to issues of gender in the larger context of a post-terror society. While, in the Sri Lankan context, those who were detained, tortured, killed or disappeared were frequently men, their absence caused great suffering to those left behind, in many instances, the women wives, mothers, and daughters. In the South, in the wake of the repression of the July uprising, large numbers of women-headed households emerged as a new social phenomenon

In 1991, the Women's Education Centre reconstituted itself into a research entity, the Women Education and Research Centre (WERC) It was WERC which finally commissioned a fieldwork-based research project into the emergence of female-headed households in post-terror South and the still war-torn East In this important study, Sasanka Perera (1999) focuses on the Sinhala-speaking districts of Monaragala and Hambantota in the deep South and Selvy Tiruchandran (1999) looks at the districts of Amparai and Trincomalee in the largely Tamil-speaking East

Both the Monaragala and Hambantota districts were badly affected by the political violence of the late-1980s Perera talks to women who became heads of their household after their male partners had disappeared/been killed in the July uprising and its repression during 198790 Perpetrators included agents of the State – the army, police, the Special Task Force of the Police (STF) and numerous pro-government paramilitary groups, as well as the JVP Perera argues that any collective attempt to deal with Sri Lanka's recent past needs to take into account the experiences of its victims, because, he says, their experiences are necessary to frame our futures, as well as theirs It is not clear if 'our' future here signifies the Sinhala nation or the Sri Lankan nation, but what is clear is that he feels the victim/survivor's narrative stands as a metaphor for a larger group which identifies with her/him or for whose experience the survivor speaks

In his discussion of torture victims, Perera speaks of the essential 'non-narratability' and 'non-communicability' of pain. There are many kinds of pain. As the recent work on the anthropology of emotion indicates, even bodily pain is not a purely empirical phenomenon. It is not acted out on a *tabula rasa*, it manifests itself through culturally articulated idioms. The body speaks its pain in diverse ways, many of it perhaps beyond language. Words are not the only means of communication, the body speaks through its demeanour, its postures, and its gestures. Perhaps the researcher's task is to capture this silent language, in the struggle against the rising tide of a repressive collective amnesia.

Perera's Stories of Survivors remains a powerful statement of the attempts by many women to rebuild their lives amidst the grinding poverty which stalks them in the wake of the removal of male partners. At the same time, for those women who were subject to domestic violence throughout their marriages, the loss of a male partner brought greater poverty, but also domestic peace. Moreover, many of these young widows, who did not wish to remarry, faced sexual harassment from neighbours, male kin, husbands of female friends, local level bureaucrats involved in the disbursement of compensation and so on Most of all, they have to pacify young children preoccupied with the need to revenge fathers/brothers who were killed or who disappeared.

Thiruchandran's *The Other Victims of War* looks at the effects of war on single women who are the heads of their households. This study also traces the steady move into greater impoverishment, loss of kin support, particularly that of the husband's family, and the problems of dealing with disturbed children. Tamil women further suffered from a pervasive cultural discourse on the 'inauspiciousness' of the widow. These two studies, thus, almost for the first time, provided important empirical material on a key issue.

Some Concluding Remarks

Thus, for all the organisations reviewed, the developments of the 1980s and 1990s did define their research agenda. However, over the decade, political developments across the region as well as methodological innovations in the West European theatre also inflected the work of a new generation of local sociologists and anthropologists. Consequently, the writings of this period reflected the disenchantment of many such local scholars with the project of the 'nation', as had happened with many other Asian and African writers educated in the metropolis.

Such research, however, did nothing to address the terrible sense of marginalisation and cultural besiegement which much of the Sinhala and Tamil-speaking intelligentsia became hostage to in a climate of escalating globalisation. For scholars educated in the metropolis, relatively more at ease with the global, these searing identity-anxieties were seen to exemplify ethnic chauvinism, even fascism, or at best, to signify illiberal tendencies.

Yet though the political climate which prevailed in the 1980s and harsh levels of censorship made any overt criticism of state terror problematic, many scholars did critique the Sinhala nationalist project in no uncertain terms. This won them the anger of the already besieged Sinhala-speaking intelligentsia But it also bought them the support of those in the Sinhala community who were struggling against the tide of 'chauvinist hysteria'. Such critical scholarship gave a new resonance and substance to dissident voices within the Sinhala nationalist project. It enabled the concept of a negotiated or political solution to the ethnic conflict to remain — sometimes in the midst of open military combat — on the political agenda throughout the 1990s.

However, while the quality of sociological research produced by the organisations surveyed is commendable, the failure to translate this material into the native languages has seriously restricted their circulation. In one instance where such a volume was translated into Sinhala and Tamil – that is, in the case of the SSA's Ethnicity and Social Change – the consequences were extraordinary and the individual authors of its chapters came under enormous pressure from native-language-speaking groups. This daunting experience did colour scholarship in the next two decades. Thus, while in subsequent years, all the research institutes explored did continue to look at critical sociological issues, they confined themselves largely to publishing for a narrow English-speaking public, under the pretext that translation demanded resources for which they had no budgetary provision. Budgeting for the translation of their output, however, cannot be seen as major constraint.

The greater problem remains the extent to which Sri Lankan scholars will be able to face up to the devastating onslaughts to which they will be subject to with the translating of their work into the native languages. It is, no doubt, possible that some aspects of these onslaughts may translate into further bloodletting, stemming both from the state and the gate-keepers of the Sinhala nation.

The availability of the products of such kinds of sociological and anthropological research to a mass native-language-reading audience will also create new problems for the state, specially the executive, including its armed forces and police. It could, of course, be argued that the repressive regimes which perpetrated the bloodletting of the 1980s and early-1990s are no more. But no executive is innocent, and further, individual members of the legislature who were members of previous regimes and other powerful figures may still feel they have much to loose in a situation such as this. The state may or may not be able to protect scholars and intellectuals from dangers stemming from within, from members of its own army, police, legislature or executive. However, as mentioned above, many native-language-readers also struggle with searing identity anxieties, the resolving of which may require a prolonged and painful exchange with the sociological and anthropological establishment which may not be easy for both

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Neoliberalism and the Structural Adjustment of the Sociological Imagination: Development Discourse and the Triumph of *Homo Oeconomicus*

Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake

Introduction

A new object emerged on the international development agenda that had long treated violence as a *non sequitur* at the end of the Cold War During the 1990s, the term 'complex emergency' (CE) increasingly described the phenomena of 'ethnic' conflict, 'failed states', refugee flows, and humanitarian intervention in conflict-torn societies in the global south. What CE discourse indexed was that violent conflicts (sometimes called postmodern wars) increasingly diverted resources from standard development problems such as poverty or illiteracy in more than forty-five countries in fragile parts of Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America. Thus, over the past decade, the international donor community pledged more than \$ 100 billion in aid to three dozen countries recovering from war, as peace building and post-conflict reconstruction emerged as a growth area in the world development industry led by the Bretton Woods institutions.²

This paper maps the emergence of violence as an analytical problem in development and post-conflict reconstruction policy discourse, the new vocabulary such as 'social capital', complex emergency, governance, etc. that it deploys, and its intellectual underpinnings. It also explores the implications for the new consensus in development circles that 'violence is economically rational' in relation to debates regarding the interpretation of culture and violence in the social sciences. In particular, this paper analyses two frameworks that underpin recent analyses of violence in the global south: culture, identity and ethnicity-based arguments used by anthropologists and political scientists to explain ethnic riots, clashing civilisations, and civil wars in historically multicultural and hybrid societies (Horowitz 1985; Tambiah 1996; Appadurai 1998), and the new consensus that violence constitutes economically rational activity, given 'lootable' primary commodities such as diamonds, drugs, gold or rents (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, World Bank 1998, Keen 2000) I suggest that the new analysis of violence that emphasises the role of global and local economic interests, diasporas, and transnational networks of trade and aid in sustaining violent conflicts constitutes a welcome break from older more or less essentialist 'ethnic' explanations of the new wars, as well as more recent constructivist and post-

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structuralist approaches that mainly focus on the significatory dimensions of violence

However, though apparently a break from more or less primordial and essentialist ethnic explanations of conflict, I suggest, the new analysis, that violence is economically rational, shares a common intellectual heritage with colonial modes of representation of 'other' cultures and their violence, including essentialist ethnic explanations. This mode of analysis also reduces the more complex social and political science analyses of the political economy of war to rational choice formulations. Violence is thus seen to be devoid of political logic and cultural form and rather the outcome of warlords engaged in rent-seeking behaviour given lootable primary commodities (oil, diamonds, drugs, gold, etc.), while the analysis of social relations in conflicttorn societies is reduced to the measurement of the poorly conceptualised notion of social capital and society is reduced to an imperfect market. The notion that 'violence is economically rational' is itself embedded in neoclassical and neoliberal cultural categories, logics and assumptions about the nature of 'human nature' - that human beings are economically rational actors, as if economic behaviour were not always already culturally, politically and socially embedded and contextualised

Rational choice readings of violence over-generalise the economic dimensions of violence and recasts socially and culturally grounded analyses of violence Neoclassical economic assumptions of 'individual optimisation' and 'utility maximisation' assume that *homo* is *oeconomicus*. This erases the founding premise of substantive economic anthropology that economic behaviour is itself politically and culturally constituted. As such, a founding insight that grounds interpretative social and cultural analysis (or the sociological imagination/imaginary) – that a 'value-free social science' is what we should strive for, even if it is impossible given that explanatory frames are always already culturally constituted – is marginalised and via the universal man – *homo oeconomicus*, or neoliberal economics' favourite actor and cultural object

Max Weber argued (contra Emile Durkheim, who believed in the science of society) that there was not and could not be a 'value-free social science' and his *verstehen* or interpretative approach became the dominant approach in the field of social and cultural studies almost for a century, as evident in the work of key sociologists and anthropologists such as Talcott Parsons, C Wright Mills, and Clifford Geertz, who elaborated on the sociological imagination and the 'interpretation of cultures' However, the past quarter century has seen the rise of post-structuralism and neoliberalism that in equal measure appear to challenge and in some ways eclipse the notion that cultures and social formations are systems or 'wholes' that may be 'interpreted and translated' The post-structuralist turn also gave rise to a

whole range of explorations of the 'social imaginary', via Cornelius Castoriadis's formulation of 'the imaginary institution of society' (1998) In the midst of the post-colonial and post-structuralist critique of social science modes of representation, rational choice theory (RCT) has enabled the return of universal rational actor while society is conceptualised as a network that links such actors. This is evident in the development policy discourse which has resulted in the restructuring of the notion of the 'social imaginary' or 'sociological imagination', even as the interpretation of cultures and societies has been reduced to the measurement of 'social capital' or social networks. This is particularly so in Sri Lanka where social science research is increasingly colonised and driven by the language, discourse and funding of international agencies involved in the field of development and reconstruction, even as the universities are being structurally adjusted

This paper explores what may be elided in the new consensus on violence and post-conflict reconstruction of conflict-torn societies in the global south. The paper suggests that there is need to subject the new consensus that violence may be explained as a rational choice and the post-conflict recipes of institution, constitution and social capital and local-capacity-building that it legitimises to the same critical analysis and deconstruction that colonial anthropological frames and primordialist ethnic explanations of violence were (Clifford and Marcus 1986)

Based on ethnographic experience as a development consultant as well as interviews with experts and consultants of the international development industry and humanitarian organisation in Sri Lanka, I suggest that the post-conflict development-tool-kit approach of institution, constitution, and 'social capital' building to promote 'good governance' and safeguard private property, results in the marginalisation of local knowledge and debate, alternative approaches to reconstruction, as well as 'other' life-ways and value systems Furthermore, social analysis is trivialised and instrumentalised as a developmental discourse increasingly deploys a conceptual vocabulary premised on the assumption that *homo* is *oeconomicus* and that societies are imperfect markets to be structurally adjusted by the World Bank

In the post-conflict reconstruction and development ideology, conflict-affected societies are more often than not constructed as bereft of knowledge, 'local capacity' and 'social capital' – tabula rasa or a conflict raised terra nova incognita – in metaphors reminiscent of early colonial anthropological discourse on 'other' societies. Thus, local knowledge, voices and debates on social peace are subsumed in the power/knowledge hierarchies that structure post-conflict development discourse, as a number of countries recovering from armed conflicts, from East Timor to Colombia,

Palestine to large swaths of Africa may become sites for a reformulated colonial *mission civilatrice* that may well lead to renewed cycles of conflict years later I suggest that 'economics imperialism' (Fine 1999, Cramer 2002) in this sense is not simply a metaphor Rather, there is need to subject the new consensus that violence may be explained in terms of RCT and the post-conflict recipes it legitimises to critical analysis and deconstruction

In the social imaginary that structures rational choice explanations of violence, the irreducibly socially and historically constituted nature of apparently objective economic categories and proxy measures are apparent. This paper then explores root metaphors, categories and representational strategies that inform the new consensus that violence may be explained as economically rational activity, while demonstrating the extent to which the new consensus on violence partakes of colonial race/ethnic anthropological categories of 'other' groups, tribes, races, etc. For, as methodological individualism appears to displace substantive social analysis of the modern political-economic and cultural-institutional causes of violent conflicts in the global south, development discourse and practice increasingly has recourse to racial metaphors

This paper then explores and explicates how social science frames have been configured in developmentalism and nationalism in the midst of a very robust debate on colonialism in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. The paper will outline the rise of what may be termed the neoliberal social imagination, where society is reduced to a network of rational actors, in contradistinction to the sociological imagination (that requires located understanding of individual behaviour as always already culturally and socially constituted, and society as greater than the sum of its parts. The paper begins by analysing the new consensus on violence, complex emergencies and post-conflict reconstruction It then maps the terrain of social science approaches to violence, and explores the intellectual underpinnings of the new consensus that violence is economically rational This leads to a consideration of the demise of ethnic explanations for conflict, and the case for an emphasis on the global dimensions of the new war economies The next section turns to postconflict reconstruction and examines the need to rethink the new recipes for development and post-conflict reconstruction. The concluding section explores what is left out of the frame of the current neoliberal consensus on peace building and post-conflict reconstruction, and calls for a considered analysis of how the macro-policies of world development may configure violent conflicts in the global south based on an understanding of deepening inequalities within and across nations and the multiple modernities that code interpretations of violence and agency

'New Wars', Globalisation of Violence and Economic Rationality

Although violence emerged recently as a development problem, ethnic riots, civil wars and clashing civilisations had been objects of social science investigation for several decades. In the post-Cold War period, as traditional identities and conflicts that were expected to wither away with modernisation seemed to gain new life and form with accelerated globalisation, analyses of collective violence, social suffering, its representation, and the (im)possibility of interpretation have proliferated among anthropologists who traditionally studied other cultures and conflicts ³ Violence has also figured as metaphor and ground in a number of critical accounts of development, where conflict appears as the outcome of a clash between global and local knowledge systems (Nandy1983, Escobar 1995, Gupta 1998) Nevertheless, the dominant paradigm to explain violence in the global south has been in terms of collective ethnic identities and sentiments

The ethnic thesis to explain violence derives from a venerable tradition of colonial anthropology that has been subject to systematic interrogation and deconstruction by post-structuralist and post-colonial theorists and approaches but nevertheless remains influential outside the field. Ethnic explanations that emphasise collective behaviour fall broadly into two camps The first constitutes primordialists, including local ethno-nationalists, who used essentialist colonial anthropological formulations to code ethnicity in the blood of warring groups, usually in terms of tribe, kinship, caste, race, descent and other 'traditional' forms of community. Violence appeared as the outcome of more or less fixed collective ancient ethnic hatreds. The second group, constituted the instrumentalists and modernist constructivists. Ethnicity was rationally manipulated, and/or culturally constructed to serve ethno-religious or linguistic group interests by ethnic entrepreneurs and local political elites, who used perceptions of economic or political grievance to gain power and resources Despite varying emphases, ethnic explanations of violence privileged internal cultural and political processes, even if colonialism, capitalism, and related exogenous processes explained escalation of violence Many instrumentalist versions and constructivist approaches partake of a sneaking essentialism

In the face of the new wars and the critique of social science essentialism in ethnic categories, a new analysis of violence that emphasised global networks in the making of internal conflicts emerged in the 1990s ⁴ Breaking with ethnic- and culture-based explanations of violence, the 'new war' approach took globalisation and international political economy as the starting point for conflict analysis. Wars were seen as a complex of international business transactions that included capital flows and networks of

crime, mercenaries, as well as humanitarian actors and diasporas. The presence of lootable natural resources generate war economies reliant on trans-border and trans-national criminal trade networks, whereby local warlords and elites depended on external markets rather than local ones to market valuable natural resources (gold, diamonds, oil, drugs, or rents), thereby hollowing out the state. Analyses of the 'new wars' and 'complex emergencies' had four broad strands and empirical referents warlords and global criminal networks, victims and humanitarian networks, state and institutional fragmentation, and diaspora networks and their inputs into local conflicts. The new analysis of war and their duration derived from structural and systemic analysis of transformations in the international political economy. Violence constituted an adaptation mainly to economic globalisation and market imperfections in the peripheries and backwaters of the international political economy (Reno 1998, Kaldor 1999, Duffield 2001)

By the end of the 1990s, the political economy focus of the 'new wars' and CEs thinned as violence became an object of developmental discourse A range of development-economics arguments explained violence essentially in terms of rational choice, information, and game theories. Violence was increasingly interpreted as an outcome of 'opportunity' and the presence of lootable resources, rather than resource scarcity, poverty or deprivation (Berdal and Malon 2000, Keen 2000, Collier and Hoeffler 2001) An agent's, usually a warlord's, decision to participate in criminal activity or civil war, was a product of a cost-benefit analysis given lootable commodities The conclusion that violence is the outcome of opportunity was summed up in several influential World Bank research papers by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, who argue 'Opportunity provides considerably more explanatory power than grievance, and economic viability appears to be the predominant systematic explanation of armed conflict are robust to correction for outliers, alternative variable definition, and variations in estimation method' (2001 1)⁵

Individual optimising behaviour rather than collective ethnic sentiment, economic grievance or liberation struggles explain the proliferation of the new wars in the global south Resource streams or rents that enable warlords and war economies to flourish also explain the differences between poor but relatively peaceful and non-peaceful countries. Of course, causal arrows may point in the opposite direction. That is, natural resource dependence in war economies may be a consequence of attenuation of manufacturing and service sectors as violence increases, rather than the other way round.

The new analysis of violence contributed enormously to demystifying and disaggregating ethnic explanations premised on group rationality arguments, even as it suggested an alternative to Robert D Kaplan's (1994) new barbarism thesis to explain conflict in Africa, by focusing on the economic

aspects and agents of violence However, unlike many proponents of the 'new wars' analysis who take a political economy approach and eschew ethnic arguments (Duffield 1996, Keen 2000), scholars like Collier and Hoeffler (2001) suggest that ethnic conflict and hatred is generated after the fact in wars that have greed and resource streams as their raison d'être Collier and Hoeffler are thus able to dismiss collective grievance arguments (inequality, poverty or under-development) as 'false consciousness' and posit that they serve as legitimacy clauses for greed, thus, they are able to gesture at the social instead of taking it as exogenous Elsewhere, however, they note en passant 'there is insufficient data to introduce distributional considerations into the empirical analysis' (1998 563) Although it is correct to suggest that violence may generate grievance and ethnic identities, it does so in a cumulative fashion Elsewhere I have suggested that conflicts begun as social justice struggles coded in ethnic terms, as in Sri Lanka or Colombia, may gain self-sustaining momentum over time, as some individuals and groups profit from them (Rajasingham-Senanayake 1996) Collier and Hoeffler, however, conflate the effects of violence with its causes and, in so doing, drain violence of political and cultural content Thus, violence may be explained both in terms of collective ethnic sentiments and individual optimising and utility maximising - core concepts of neoclassical economics Indeed, the suggestion is that economically rational violence is perfectly compatible with ethnic/cultural factors at play Witness the arrival of homo oeconomicus on the scene of ethnic conflict!

Having replaced ethnic fragmentation explanations that posit primitive mentalities, irrational group hatreds, etc. with methodological individualism, Collier and Hoeffler slide right back onto ethnic explanations. Some have suggested that this is largely because Collier and Hoeffler's use of proxies to measure greed and grievance seems patchwork (Cramer 2002) However, the more fundamental point is that rational choice explanations of violence are circular, despite their claim (against structuralism and functionalism) to explain change because they privilege a model of the human being as a trans-historical homo oeconomicus Moreover, core concepts of neoclassical economics — such as the optimising individual — cannot sufficiently explain the empirical evidence on the collective and culturally coded nature of violence ⁶

The assumption that violence constitutes economically rational activity lacks a theory of economic behaviour as a socially, politically and culturally constituted practice Explaining violence in terms of individual optimising does not tell us much more than explaining it in terms of ancient ethnic hatreds. In the new consensus, violent activity is drained of symbolic logic and thereby of collective political or cultural process. Methodological indi-

vidualism in the form of individual optimising agents who band together for collective benefit replaces a notion of economic behaviour as socially embedded. The social is merely an aggregate of optimising individuals or, in this case, warlords who are rarely seen as social actors. Thus, in Collier's model, ethnic causality is an *ex post facto* variable, subordinate to greedy economic rationality, and symbolic and political factors have no real explanatory value. Likewise, in rational choice explanations of conflict, Carl von Clauswitz's (1984) statement 'war is politics by other means' is reformulated as 'war is economics by other means' (Keen 2000). Thus, politically motivated violence merely constitutes individual criminal activity Ergo, those who think that violence may have collective political content and meaning, whether nationalist or scholar, must be duped or suffer false consciousness—a proposition that is easily challenged by an elementary analysis of violence as a form of political and symbolic action

I met and interviewed Dhanu in July 1997 She was then Commander of the women's wing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fighting for a separate state for an ethnic minority in Sri Lanka Our meeting took place two years before she assassinated former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in a suicide attack. I interviewed her in the LTTE headquarters soon after Gandhi had dispatched the Indian Peace-Keeping Troops to bolster a ceasefire in Sri Lanka in 1987. In the course of our meeting, Dhanu, a highly intelligent and articulate woman in her mid-twenties, provided an account of violence committed by the state and the Sri Lankan military against her community. She insisted that she was fighting for the honour and liberation of her people. I had gone to interview her on the position of women in the LTTE. She told me that women's liberation was necessary, but could only be achieved after the war for Eelam (the homeland of the Tamil people) was won.

The minutely calculated and coordinated actions of Dhanu, who passed high level security on her death march to Gandhi in Sriperambadur (in Tamil Nadu, India) in 1989, cannot be explained in terms of economic rationality Nor can such action be reduced to false consciousness of usually rational agents. Suicide bombing constitutes a meaning-laden, symbolically loaded act of *gift* giving of life for political community, homeland, or national self-determination Suicide bombing (in Durkheimian terms is 'altruistic' suicide, where attachment to community triumphs self-interest), returns us to the irreducibly social, political, cultural and symbolic domain of agency, in this case, the logic of gift exchange coded in the non-market logic of gift giving for community and political cause, rather than for individual profit or self-interest. Since the rational actor intentionally dies, suicide bombing negates the methodological individualism at the heart of the rational choice arguments that would code the honour and martyrdom that accrue to the

individual's family as a form of suicidal self-interest! It is fundamentally a social act. Or else political and culturally motivated violence of this nature must constitute economic rationality gone mad! Rather, the paradox of explaining political agency in terms of individual optimising and networks of aggregated self-interest is apparent. The paradox moves us into the realm of the culturally and politically coded nature of agency. Dhanu was a modern political agent fighting for a nation-state and what she believed to be her community's right to self-determination, in the language of the modern nation-state, albeit an ethnically coded nation-state. But, then, what modern nation-state is not ethnically coded?

Does this then return us to *homo ethnicus*, which for all its shortcomings recognised that rationality and agency is socially embedded and is culturally, politically and historically constituted? Lest we forget, there are several *other* compelling reasons to welcome the demise of ethnic explanations of violence, and the contribution of rational choice approaches to demystify and disaggregate more or less essentialist ethnic interpretations of violence

- (1) Ethnic explanations essentialise identity politics as noted by a range of post-structuralist and post-colonial critics. They are circular because they posit what they purport to explain. Ethnic causality cannot explain why highly multiethnic and hybrid societies, with centuries-long histories of co-existence and inter-marriage among diverse linguistic and religious communities have become sites of violent conflicts in the last two or three decades (for example, Rwanda, Sri Lanka or Bosnia). Ethnic explanations fuel the very conflicts that they claim to explain by naturalising an essentialist and militant view of identity. Unfortunately, important social scientific analysis has been part of this tendency to essentialise ethnicity and, thus, the logic of conflict
- (2) Ethnic explanations obscure the role of states, their coercive apparatuses, and superpower rivalry leading to militarised internal economies and social discontent in the global south, especially during the era of proxy wars of the Cold War era in Africa and Latin America and their legacies. Ethnic explanations mask the new forms of violence (counter-terrorist operations, ethnic cleansing, etc.) that characterise the new wars, and the fact that many of these forms of violence are developed within a global nation-state-centric identity politics and an international military industrial complex. The forms of violence practised by the state and the non-state actors are modern, organised, systematised and routinised. These new forms of violence are perpetrated by military and paramilitary organisations often trained by international experts. Organised and institutional violence is conflated with an ethnic group. So too, does ethnic analysis feed conflict.

- (3) Ethnic explanations of armed conflict mask the dialectical and dynamic nature of identity production in war They conceal the fact that violence invents identities, cultures and borders If the clash of cultures and civilisations generates conflict, so too does conflict generate culture (just as modernisation generates 'invention of tradition') Ethnic explanations, even constructivist ones that posit that group sentiments are strategically mobilised, presume that culture and identity are fixed, rather than being modern politically constituted phenomena
- (4) Ethnic explanations implicitly and explicitly perpetuate ethnic solutions, borders, and partitions that *institutionalise* polarisation and the modern logic of mono-ethnic rather than hybrid identity (also generated by violence) Identities generated by war are frequently institutionalised during peace negotiations and emergent borders without safeguards for local minorities and hybrid communities Growth of an ethnic enclave mentality, which presumes that people of different cultures who for generations shared a common social space cannot share the same neighbourhood, village, city, and places of religious worship or public space, becomes the basis of the new borders, the new peace, and the institutions for post-conflict reconstruction to begin Thus, ethnic solutions often become blueprints for more violence.

Neither Homo Ethnicus nor Homo Oeconomicus: The Return of the Repressed

Homo ethnicus and homo oeconomicus, though apparently distinct frames are also mirror images that buttress one another, to achieve the paradoxical explanation of collective social behaviour in terms of methodological individualism Both models posit the autonomy of culture and economics (rather than viewing them as constitutive orders in a social field), contra political economic approaches and post-structuralist conceptions of agency As such, the first (homo ethnicus) reduces political economy to an essentialised version of culture, while the second (homo oeconomicus) reduces politics and culture to principles of neoclassical economics posited on utility maximising and individual optimising. It is hence that the economic rationality of violence argument coincides neatly with modernisation versions of ethnic violence that used to posit that ethnicity would wither away with the forward march of modernity, but now posits that modernisation and globalisation have consolidated (ethnic) conflict in the shape of greedy ethnic entrepreneurs, political elites, etc Only, now economic rationality is attributed to 'other' cultures and their violent conflicts that used to be explained in terms of their irrationality, primitive mentalities or backwardness.

Ethnic- and greed-based economic explanations of violent conflict also have a common colonial anthropological genealogy and representational structure Both models share a colonial national geographic imagination. It is significant that conflicts in Africa, rather than those in Europe, Latin America or Asia, are the root metaphor of the argument that violence is economically rational. Collier, Keen and a number of others who explain violence in terms of economic rationality explicitly focus on wars in Africa. It is then in the back to the future of Africa's heart of darkness that violent agency may be reckoned to be devoid of cultural and political content, and purely economically motivated self-interested activity

Colonial anthropology always posited the primitiveness of African societies and the (relative) lack of culture On the other hand, in the same Orientalist imaginary, Asian societies (full of group values) were viewed as more complex (high-cultures that had degenerated) Not surprisingly, it is in Africa that RCT explanation of violence gives rationality back to warlords by confusing self-interest with rationality while implicitly equating selfinterested violence with culture (or rather its lack!). Although the African model of lootable resources and economically rational violence is generalised across cultures and continents to Asian and Latin American conflicts. in the analysis of Collier et al, as soon as we leave Africa we move to the more complex level of 'ethnic' explanation of violence in Asia which has been a site of anxiety for development economics, given that Asian tiger economies that were constituted as exemplars of post-colonial success remained precariously poised on the verge of ethnic violence. In short, the case for explaining violence in terms of rational choices appears to be pre-selected to confirm the presence of lootable commodities Violent conflicts in Asia, Eastern Europe, or Latin America, where there may be no significant commodities and rents, are largely ignored or other variables such as grievance, ethnicity etc are included ex-post facto

In the final analysis, neither the economic rationality of warlords and free riders nor the ethnic model is satisfactory. Both are profoundly ahistorical and reproduce colonial anthropological modes of representation that tended to place other cultures outside the world historical time. Both elide the modern institutional dimensions of conflicts, the former by economic rationalisation of political and cultural processes based on methodological individualism embedded in rational choice approaches to violence, and the latter by essentialising the 'other' in terms of race, ethnicity or some other blood-related primordialism, as once did colonial anthropology. Moreover, both models lack a theory of power, the state and institutionalised violence, and thus an analysis of the *articulation* of global-local institutions and structures of power in the making of violent conflicts and agency in the

global south Indeed, the proliferation of paradoxes in RCT explanations of violence reflects the need for a 'a theory of the theoretical and social conditions of the possibility of objective apprehension — and, thereby, a theory of the limits of this mode of knowledge' as suggested by Pierre Bourdieu (1977: 4) Moreover, the poverty of theory that characterises the new consensus that violence is an economic activity is evident in the post-conflict reconstruction discourse it legitimises.

Post-conflict Reconstruction or Colonialism Revisited? Capitalising Social Relations

Those who would build peace should best understand war The neoclassical reading of conflict rationalises and legitimises the neoliberal approach to peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. The World Bank Report on Africa in 1989 observed that 'underlying the litany of Africa's development problems is a crisis of governance' ⁸ Within a decade, the solution to the crisis evolved into building institutions, constitutions (legal frameworks), and social capital for 'good governance' in conflict and post-conflict societies. This approach to post-conflict reconstruction was manifest in another part of the world, East Timor, the newest addition to the international state system where the UNDP with the international community built top-down the institutions for a modern nation-state. Other options for East Timorese self-determination based on local practice and knowledge were less an option in resource-rich Timor that received a birthing gift of pre-negotiated agreements with Australia on how best to exploit its natural resource wealth

Institution- and constitution-building along with social capital building in the global south are part of the more general programme for capital friendly world development. Thus, the World Development Report 1999/2000 notes

A solid foundation of effective organisations and enabling institutions is a necessary precondition for development. In this context institutions are sets of rules governing the actions of individuals and organisations and the interaction of all relevant parties. Specifically countries need institutions that strengthen organisations and promote good governance, whether through laws and regulations or by coordinating the actions of many players, as international treaties and public-private partnerships. Rule-based procedures increase the transparency of policies designed to create desired outcomes and of organisations used to implement them (2000).

'Effective organisation and enabling institutions' refers primarily to the legal frameworks that facilitate public-private partnerships and private property interests, while the stated logic is eliminating market and by now non-market imperfections 'Good governance' for post-conflict reconstruction thus includes an efficient public service, an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts, an accountable and transparent administration of public funds, an independent public auditor accountable to a representative legislature, and respect for law and human rights, pluralistic institutional structure, and free press The language and the model for good governance are exported from corporate governance (albeit before Enron's and Arthur Anderson's implosion) Institutions appear to be autonomous from rather than embedded in local political and cultural processes, while local social relations are conceptualised as and measured in terms of social capital. Thus, the World Bank's website states

Social capital refers to the institutions, relationship, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Increasingly evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society—it is the glue that holds them together (http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/whatsc.htm)

Social capital, as the missing link, constitutes the cultural and political glue that binds societies to maintain social peace and cohesion Conversely, war-torn societies suffer a deficit of social capital, indexed in lack of institutions, constitutions, networks and trust that fuel wars. In the new postconflict reconstruction and development discourse, institution and constitution building and social capital building constitute a mantra to cure all ills Social capital analysis also underpins a range of developmental micro-interventions to promote poverty alleviation, social development and mobilisation, savings, credit and micro-entrepreneurship. Depending on whether it is good or bad social capital, social peace may or may not be facilitated However, it is not clear whether lack of social capital is the cause or the consequence of violence or institutional failure. Nor is it clear whether, when and how good social capital may go bad Social capital simply posits that actors form networks that generate and enable trust, associations, institutions, etc for their own and sometimes collective benefit. At other times, these same networks (for example, warlords) may stifle and disable trust and social peace. As such, social capital analysis has no explanatory mechanism of social change social relations and collective behaviour are an effect of individual optimising warlords or civil society glossed as free riders, individuals may, however, change their minds Society is thus an aggregate of optimising social capitalists who cultivate networks of social capital for individual and/or collective gain, in a theory that builds from the micro to the macro ⁹

What the construction of war-torn society as bereft of social capital enables is the marginalising of in-country national expertise, local knowledge, and debates on social peace. Positing the lack of social capital to explain violence (and institutional failure) is the functional equivalent of explaining violence as the outcome of economically rational activity. Both frameworks presume the existence of individual optimising and utility maximising, homo oeconomicus—neoliberal economics' favourite actor and cultural object 'Social capital' has no vocabulary for culture and politics to explain conflict or peace because society is an aggregate of optimising individuals, albeit of the networking species

The notion of social capital also trivialises Bourdieu's (1990) analysis of symbolic capital that provided the conceptual framework for 'social capital' via Putnam et al 10 Bourdieu argued that economic activity is a culturally constituted practice based on a theorised refusal to reduce social practice to economic rationality 11 Drawing on Karl Polanyi's analysis of 'non-market' economies, he argued that capital is itself a social construct - 'material wealth cannot be turned into capital unless it is part of an economic apparatus' (Bourdieu 1977) The notion of symbolic capital drew on Polanyi's critique of Marx's economic determinism as well as on a critique of economic formalism, whereby Polanyi (1957) argued that European and American industrial capitalism was historically and anthropologically unique, insofar as economic institutions exist autonomously from other institutions (kinship, kingship, education, etc.). From this it followed that formal micro-economic theory may be inappropriate to analyse 'other' nonmarket economic formations where economic institutions were directly socially and culturally embedded Indeed, Polanyi (Ibid) suggested that the study of other economic systems requires a different theoretical language 13

Thus, Bourdieu (1977) developed the notion of cultural capital that is embedded in a social field of practice and various forms of symbolic capital that were not reducible to one another for precisely this reason ¹⁴ What is lost is the founding anthropological premise that societies and social fields needed to be interpreted in their own-term and their constitutive cultural logics revealed through rigorous sociological analysis. Bourdieu's contribution was to posit the analysis of social capital within a total social field and *habitus* based on substantial local knowledge and anthropological analysis. That is, the concern was to understand the distinctive nature of 'other' peoples, cultures, histories, and economies in a non-reductive manner

The Violence of Social Capital

Converting 'other' socioeconomic systems and social relationships into capital networks is the opposite of what Bourdieu envisioned in the Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977), where the notion of symbolic capital was laid out Contra Bourdieu's analysis, the development theorists' use of the term 'social capital' reduces all things to the logic of commodity exchange by converting social relations (across cultures) directly as capital. In the development policy discourse, in line with developmental shifts from physical to financial, to human capital - with these generally interpreted within neoclassical orthodoxy - capital is no longer a metaphor or heuristic device to interpret exchange and consumption in different symbolic systems and cultural logics (gift economies, Kula rings, potlatches, war economies or even Confucian capitalism) Nor does 'social capital' acknowledge that culture and economy (in the narrow sense) are constitutive orders Rather, social capital converts and convenes culturally, politically and historically distinct social and symbolic formations into the homogenous empty time of global modernity and the logic of the 'free' market, by erasing difference

As Partha Chatterjee notes:

if there is one great moment that turns the provincial thought of Europe to universal philosophy, the parochial history of Europe to universal history, it is the moment of capital — capital that is global in its territorial reach and universal in its conceptual domain. It is the narrative of capital that can turn the violence of mercantilist trade, war, genocide, conquest and colonialism, into a story of universal progress, development, modernisation and freedom For this narrative to take place the destruction of community is fundamental

[C]ommunity in the narrative of capital, becomes relegated to the latter's prehistory, a natural, pre-political, primordial stage in social evolution that must be superseded for the journey of freedom and progress to begin. And since the story of capital is universal, community too becomes the universal prehistory of progress, identified with medievalism in Europe and the stagnant, backward, underdeveloped present in the rest of the world (1993–235)

Chatterjee may well have added conflict-torn regions of the world to this list of the stagnant, backward, and underdeveloped. For, on the scene of post-conflict reconstruction looms a scenario familiar to students of colonialism's culture—the *tabula rasa* image of conflict-torn societies bereft of social capital and cultural logic, yet to be (re)inscribed by the colonial *mission civilatrice* of neoliberal institutions and constitutions to enable the evolution of social capital/capitalists—albeit with several crucial differences. In the post-conflict reconstruction discourse, the natives, thought bereft of

social capital, are economically rational warlords or free riders. They are, therefore, able to understand and generate (social) capital if the necessary incentives and institutional frames are provided. Agency in war-torn society is the domain of violent actors and civil society glossed as free riders while the rest is tabula rasa - similar to the double inscription characteristic of colonial discourse (Bhabha 1994) After social capital has been measured and quantified, the image of the local war-torn society, be it civil or uncivil. that emerges is a 'society' that is full of networks of optimising individuals who are devoid of cultural and political logic or action. However, unlike colonial modes of representation, where 'other' cultures, people and violence were placed outside the world historical time, and viewed as traditional and primordial (as in the ethnic model) by exaggerating cultural difference and collectivity (Said 1979), the post-conflict reconstruction discourse flattens cultural difference via homo oeconomicus and social capital. Cultural and ethnic difference that once explained 'their' collective violence is dissolved and, instead, their collective violence is explained in terms of their economic rationality and/or lack of social capital

Rational choice explanations of violence and post-conflict reconstruction recipes they underpin are then susceptible to the critique of double discourse that colonial anthropological modes of representing other cultures, as conflicts are increasingly cast in the mirror image of neoliberalism's favourite cultural object, homo oeconomicus Similarly, in the age of information and game theories and network wars, war-torn society becomes an imperfect market to be perfected by institution, constitution, and social capital building for 'good governance' Thus, neoclassical economics explains the social, the political and the cultural without taking them as exogenous, and never mind Polanyi, who thought that economy is culturally and politically constituted ¹⁵ However, it is increasingly apparent that, though RCT and the notion of social capital enables converting and convening a range of historically. politically, culturally and geographically distinct yet globally articulated conflicts to the 'homogenous empty time of global modernity' and the market, what is missing is a theory of power and agency that is culturally and politically mediated

The earlier political economy analyses of internal armed conflicts that drew from the complex work of social scientists who analysed Cold Warnspired dirty wars in Latin America and Africa (Stanley 1996, Reno 1998), and that were grounded in a grasp of local culture, elite politics, state building, and the role of external actors in internal conflicts. The new analysis that violence is economically rational is a functionalist reduction of violence that marginalises political and cultural logics of violence. Such a mode of analysis seemed impossible to most social scientists after Edward Said's classic critique of Orientalism (1979) that also deconstructed colonial

anthropological and social science modes of representing 'other' cultures, peoples, histories and violence. But the post-colonial and post-structuralist critique of representation that appeared to have been deconstructed its object of study—the social and cultural—and in some instances reconstructed it in the realm of the 'imaginary' institution of society, has had limited reception in the South Asian region where social science research is increasingly funded by development agencies and tends to take an 'applied' approach Nevertheless, the notion of the play image, imaginary, or imagination remains central in the field of social and cultural anthropological studies, even as other parts have been colonised by 'economics imperialism' via key assumptions of neoclassical and neoliberal economics, that is, (wo)man as a rational actor who is into profit maximisation and utility optimisation

Wither Homo Oeconomicus?

History repeats itself, as Marx was fond of saying Whether it does so as farce, or tragedy, or irony, may depend on where one is located in the World Development, peace, and post-conflict reconstruction industry Fifty years of World Development led by the Bretton Woods Institutions reflects two contrasting trends ¹⁶ The first is sustained improvement in living conditions, evident in declining mortality rates, rising per capita incomes, better nutrition, and improved education levels in many countries. The second is widening income disparities among and within many counties of the global north and south, and the periodic destruction of development achievements in violence 17 Development economics has mainly focused on successes, and, if at all theorised violence, hot and cold wars, and the international military industrial complex as conducive to economic growth. There has been little attempt to link increased inequality, social polarisation and violent conflicts Indeed, until very recently, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund ignored military expenditure in war-torn countries, though cut backs in the social sector for economic efficiency and structural adjustment has been routine 18 This is the case despite a number of studies that have suggested that state violence and the related 'privatisation of the state' (particularly in some African contexts that were theatres of proxy wars) have been a significant source of violence and humanitarian emergencies (Hibou 2002, Nafzinger and Auvinen 2002)¹⁹ and its global articulations occur

Increased recognition that violent conflicts could undo years of development achievements, and, since '9/11', that underdevelopment may constitute a security threat has not entailed formal acknowledgement of the converse process the macro-policies and practices of world development may also structure and fuel domestic political-economic transformations and societal

polarisations Nor does the new consensus on the economic rationality of violence and the post-conflict discourse it underpins address the mounting empirical evidence that the macro-policies of development as well as militarised domestic and international security frameworks may contribute to widen socioeconomic inequalities leading to a range of violent armed conflicts within countries and between the countries of the global south and north (UNDP 2000)

Hence, this paper has outlined the rise of what may be termed a neoliberal social imaginary in contradistinction to the notion of the 'sociological imagination' that has provided inspiration to a generation of interpretative social scientists. The field of sociology in Sri Lanka, as in other conflict-torn societies has been slow to assimilate the critique of representation that sought to show how fields of knowledge are constituted within particular linguistic and symbolic systems, as well as power dynamics. This is partly due to the manner in which, on the one hand, social science frames partake of post-colonial nationalism, and, on the other, the manner in which globalisation and developmental discourse has colonised the social sciences in the island partly due to funding and other structures of opportunity for social scientists

Explaining violence in terms of the lack of social capital and RCT merely glosses this analytic lacuna and results in a thin description of the complex modern political-economic-cultural articulations of war and peace in the global south. ²⁰ Hence, this essay has sought to explore and deconstruct the intellectual underpinnings of the new policy consensus on violence and locate it in the wider field of social science debate. In so doing, the limits of the notion of 'social capital' which may have some value for applied social and policy work have become evident. The point then is to grasp the limits of such a conceptual frame, for, otherwise, the large questions of meaning and method remain invisible and there is a tendency to trivialise social analysis, theory and method

Finally, marking the trivialisation of social analysis and the absence of history and cultural complexity in the new consensus on violence and post-conflict reconstruction is not a matter of nostalgia or human interest in the passing of local modes of multiculturalism in historically diverse societies and polities that are currently war-torn in the global south. Rather, bringing the 'other' history of co-existence and community into the analytic frame of violence enables us to recognise its modern institutional dimensions and simultaneously its specific local-global articulations. Finally, it is when the long duration of inter-group 'ethnic' relations in historically diverse societies and polities is brought into the analytic frame that the violence of neo-liberal and trajectories of 'world development' and the economics imperialism that rationalises it become visible. A different conceptual vocabulary that crosses

international political and economic analysis of conflict with constructivist cultural and social approaches that view violent agency as culturally, politically and historically constituted is necessary.

Notes

- While there is a debate as to whether the number of conflicts have declined or increased this century, Colletta and Kostner (2000) note that current estimate of the number of civil wars are forty-five or fifty depending on one's criteria. Collier and Hoeffler (2001) use the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's list of twenty-seven 'major' armed conflicts in their analysis of Greed and Grievance in Civil War.
- This challenge is evident in a gamut of new institutional arrangements and conflict analyses. The OECD Development Assistance Committee Informal Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation was set up in October 1995, and new DAC guidelines for assistance were developed in 1997. The setting up of OCHA (the Office of the Co-ordinator for Humanitarian Affairs) in 1997 and the UNRISD War-torn Societies Project in 1995 were other UN-wide response to complex armed conflicts. More recently, the World Bank has set up a Post-Conflict Unit in the Social Development Department as well as a Post-Conflict Fund, as part of its Development Grant Facility, along with a Framework for World Bank Involvement in Post-Conflict Situations (cf Post-Conflict Reconstruction The Role of the World Bank www) and a research project on armed conflict and crime. Also relevant is the 1999 Brookings Institution process that brought together UNCHR and the Bank on humanitarian issues in conflict-torn societies. Collectively, these initiatives on conflict mitigation and peace building constitute explicit recognition of the challenges that armed conflict poses to the development theory.
- Horowitz's Ethnic Groups in Conflict (1985) was one of the early systematic statements of the problem as such Within anthropology, there are more interesting approaches to violent conflict, including post-colonial theorisations of the violence of the modern nation-state building project and reactions to it More recently, Appadurai, Tambiah, Kleinman, and Warren, to name a few, have written on collective violence and state formation Also influential in the violence and ethnicity literature is the phenomenological approach that places violence outside the reach of empirical research. A notable example is Daniels, who has argued that violence constitutes a 'counterpoint to culture there is neither ontology nor epistemology, hermeneutics nor semiotic, materialism nor idealism' (1991 16) While Daniel's position might seem to smack of theoretical resignation, it also reflects the knowledge of the representational and symbolic complexity that interpreting violent actions entails. This issue is simply elided by the economic rationality school Among those who do comparative studies of violent conflicts, few have asked why fifty years of World Development has coincided with so many armed conflicts in historically plural and peaceful societies with established mores of co-existence between diverse communities, or how modern forms of violence creates culture and divides historically plural and hybrid societies? (Rajasingham-Senanayake 1999)
- One of the early systematic statements that cast violence as a developmental issue appeared in the States of Disarray study prepared for the United Nations Social Summit by the UN Institute for Social Research in a chapter on war-torn societies (UNRISD 1995) That essay defined 'new wars' and complex emergencies as a shift from warfare between states and conventional armies to intra-state warfare, characterised by fragmentation and proliferation of armed actors and paramilitary groups. Also noted were

- the high levels of collective violence. These conflicts, it was noted frequently, resulted in the breakdown of law and order, the attenuation of fundamental rights and constitutional due process leading to gross human rights violations, forced migration, humanitarian emergencies and 'failed states' Also emphasised in the UNRISD study was the multiplicity of causes for the new wars (poverty, marginalisation, and uneven development)—hence the term 'complex emergency', albeit with a strong economism
- The World Bank research programme 'The Economics of Crime and Violence' was launched in 1999 under the direction of Paul Collier, Research Director at the World Bank, and Ibrahim Elbadawi, member of the Development Economics Research Group (DECRG) and the Africa Department That study used a new data-set of wars during 1960-99 to investigate violence in terms of atypically severe grievances, such as high inequality, a lack of political rights, or ethnic and religious divisions in society, and/or atypical opportunities for building a rebel organisation
- As Mkandawire (2000) notes, it generates a view of 'us and them' that is ultimately Panglossian. In this sense, the CE analysis is not very different from Kaplan's (1994) work on chaos and anarchy in Africa the most influential of the more facile, racially coded, narratives of armed conflict.
- 7 This thesis has given rise to an enormous volume of analyses of the relationship between natural resource dependence and war
- 8 In a critique of the African states that suggests deconstructive institutional reform, Adrian Leftwich (1993) has noted that the first contemporary notion of 'good governance' came in precisely this World Bank report titled Sub-Saharan Africa From Crisis to Sustainable Growth (Washington DC World bank, 1989)
- 9 This is not Polanyi redux When Polanyi (1944, 1957) insisted that economic behaviour is embedded in social relations was interested in understanding the historical particularity of industrial capitalism and thus the logic of non-market economies. In the new discourse on conflict and post-conflict reconstruction, rational choice along with profit maximising homo oeconomicus is generalised across 'other' cultures and societies as with the new institutional economics approach
- For a critical discussion of the role social capital in the Post-Washington consensus, see Fine (1999) For the politics o' the upheaval in the Bank that Post-Washington signified, including the controversial W orld Development Report and Joseph Stiglitz's exit, see Wade (2001)
- 11 Cf Bourdieu's analysis of economism as a form of ethnocentrism (1990 113)
- 12 The exogenousness of capitalist market economy, historically and anthropologically unique, is, in fact, at the core of the substantivist claim that economic practice and institutions are embedded in social relations, and hence the further requirement that different socioeconomic formations require a different theoretical language if they are to be grasped, just as Kula ring gift economies, or apparently 'irrational' ritual expenditures (potlatches), or contemporary 'Confucian capitalism' The approach to economy as socially embedded foregrounds the problematic of cultural translation that constitutes a founding rational for the ethnographic method, and the need to grasp the distinctive nature of 'other' peoples, cultures, histories, and economies a project that, of course, requires substantial local knowledge and recognition of cultural particularity
- 13 Polanyi (1957) used the shorthand term 'non-market' economies to describe economies (including gift economies) that anthropologists traditionally study That is, social systems where economy does not necessarily exist as a separate subsystem as in industrial capitalist societies
- 14 In Bourdieu's reading, the social and the economic were constitutive orders, as clearly elaborated in his seminal study of culture and economy in Kabylia, an Algerian village, where he developed the notion of 'symbolic capital' as laid out in the path-breaking

- ethnography Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977) This ethnography preceded Distinction A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (1984), in which he developed the notion of cultural capital to elaborate social class differentials in France subsequently tamed in the social capital work of Putnam It is ironic that Bourdieu's work which has sought to mount a critique of capitalism from outside it, by focusing on the radical difference of other economies gift, sacrificial, ritual, festive should have become the inspiration for the facile neoliberal capitalisation of the social across cultures!
- 15 As Fine (1999) ironically notes, whether economists are happy with the term social capital in the long run is far less relevant than the way in which their new micro-economic understanding of market imperfections is being incorporated into the economic understanding of non-economists
- 16 The World Bank's annual reports are World Development Reports
- 17 For income disparities within and across countries, see the UNDP Human Development Report 2000
- 18 Dreze (2000) has argued that this is largely due to development economists' active collaboration with the military establishment overwhelmingly headquartered in the north
- 19 Darby notes 'of the thirty-eight formal peace accords signed between January 1988 and December 1998, thirty-one failed to last more than three years' (2001 8)
- 20 Here, I invoke Geertz's (1973) notion of 'thick description' as a methodology for the interpretation of culture, and as a counter point to the developmental discourse's capitalisation of the social

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Peace, Conflict and Development: A Macro Sociological Perspective

Siri Hettige

Introduction

It is significant that we are in an era when development as a process of socioeconomic change is widely conceptualised in direct reference to peace and conflict. Development-assistance agencies, such as the World Bank, have shown an increasing tendency to view development as a process with peace and conflict implications. In other words, the widely held view today is that development could help avoid or reduce conflict.

It is not difficult to understand why development practitioners are concerned about the 'conflict potential' of development According to 2000/2001 World Development Report, 80 percent of the incidents of civil war and strife during the period 1990-95 were concentrated in developing countries (World Bank 2001: 50) It is also significant that a large proportion of these conflicts have taken place in sub-Saharan Africa that has one of the world's highest concentrations of abject poverty What is noted here, by implication, is that there is a symbiotic relationship between the level of development and conflict 'poor countries produce more conflict, and widespread conflicts, in turn, produce greater poverty and deprivation'

What is peculiar about the above analysis is that it is contextualised in an extremely ahistorical manner. In other words, the contextualisation is largely independent of time and space. On the other hand, a broader conceptual framework would indicate that development is a process that has often involved both structural and symbolic violence. It is a phenomenon with a long history, spanning over several centuries (cf. Baeck 1993). Moreover, deprivation and poverty in much of the developing world cannot be discussed without reference to growth and affluence elsewhere (cf. Rifkin 1981).

'9/11' (11 September 2002), which many people routinely refer to when they talk about the present global condition, has persuaded the world leaders to explicitly recognise the connection between development and security While some commentators would like to see the nexus as one connected with conflicting value systems or worldviews (Huntington 1991), others see a structural link between material and symbolic violence, on the one hand, and growing terrorism, on the other

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Increasing insecurity on a global level and intensifying conflicts and disorder in many parts of the developing world have compelled the global elites to perceive underdevelopment as a dangerous condition that poses numerous threats to the emergent liberal world order that is, illegal migration, refugees, cross-border terrorism, failed states, disruption of energy and vital raw material flows, security threats to foreign investments, widening gap between the rich and the poor, increasing criminality, etc

The above developments have compelled international developmentassistance agencies, which until recently pursued a crude neoliberal economic agenda that emphasised free enterprise, structural adjustment and least state-intervention, to broaden the scope of their agenda to include such areas of concern as governance, human rights, and poverty reduction within their policy frameworks (World Bank 2001) Yet the basic issue here is whether this kind of response goes deep and far enough to address the root causes of the ensuing global socio-political crisis If one closely examines the conditions prevailing in many developing countries, it is doubtful whether a mere emphasis on good governance, human rights, and poverty reduction within a broadly liberal framework1 is going to bring about the desired changes in these countries. In other words, the current tendency to treat the above issues as endogenous to the countries concerned, with no attempt to locate them in a wider historical and global context, is unlikely to provide an adequate conceptual framework for addressing them in a meaningful way

Therefore, the question that we have to ask is 'Whether the present neoliberal development model is going to help resolve conflicts raging in many parts of the developing world and restore peace, order and stability required for sustainable development? The answer to this question seems to lie in our understanding of the wider contexts of development and conflict. In the following section, an attempt is made to highlight some of the important issues connected with development.

Issues of Development

There is already a large body of literature critiquing the neoliberal, growth-oriented development model. On the one hand, there is the powerful ecological critique that identifies the ecological limits to economic growth as it is pursued within the current liberal economic model (see Rifkin 1981, Brown et al 1991). The main point these critiques make is that the western, high-energy-intensive development model cannot be generalised across the globe, as the available non-renewable energy resources are going to be depleted in the near future. On the other hand, there are other arguments that highlight various negative social and

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cultural implications of market-led economic growth such as growing socioeconomic disparities, marginalisation of cultural traditions, accumulation of debts, mass migration, escalation of conflicts, mass rural exodus, increasing crime and illegal economic activities, etc

What is interesting to note is that the most revolutionary backlashes have taken place in countries where the western liberal economic model appear to have been most successful L Baeck describes the famous Iranian case as follow:

There is no doubt that Iran's revolution was an assault against the western development model launched by the Pahlevi dynasty. Iran is an example of development breakdown caused by Petromania and brutal modernisation. After the oil shock of 1973, the Shah launched a megalomaniac modernisation and westernisation policy in a country that was known for its intense nationalism, cultural pride and the solid organisation of its Shiite clergy. His strategy of economic development involved galloping imports of food, consumer durables, high-tech equipment, transport machinery and tourist services. The neglect and ensuing stagnation of traditional production and exports resulted in wastage of traditional skilled agricultural and handicraft labour causing discrimination against the traditional middle class, such as the *bazaari*, or local merchants. Those neglected traditional segments of the population were willing to join the Shiite clergy on the moral assault on the regime (1993–113-14)

It is true that the adoption of the western liberal model has not produced identical results everywhere. There are countries, particularly in East Asia, where there has been sustained economic growth leading to higher standards of living, for the general population. The cases in point are South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. What is significant here is that the state in these countries has played a dominant, regulatory function, rather than adopting a 'roll back' position as is usually advocated by neoliberal development theorists. On the other hand, when we look at the developing world as a whole, overall pattern has not been encouraging. The pattern has not changed much over the last several decades. Accumulating debt, widening gap between the rich and the poor—both nationally and internationally, social and political disorganisation, increasing crime and violence, etc continue to be critical issues in most countries (Jalee 1969, Hayter 1971; Elsenhans 1991, Baeck 1993, Amin 1997, Chabal and Daloz 1999)

The resurgence of tradition by way of ethnic mobilisation, religious revival, and opposition to western values and lifestyles are evident in many non-western societies today. While some of the manifestations have taken extremely violent forms, as in the Middle East and in some South East Asian countries, others have been more benign, yet equally

assertive. Religious revival in countries like Sri Lanka and India is an obvious reaction to the rapid transformation of popular culture under the influence western media and consumerism, in addition to the great uncertainties created by market fluctuations, rapid mobility of people, etc

The emergent conditions in much of the developing world can hardly be described as secure, contended and stable. These conditions pose a danger to national governments and international capital. Therefore, the new emphasis on the development-security nexus. What is noteworthy, however, is that the development practitioners, as represented by development-assistance agencies and the newly formed groups of conflict-resolution experts, are preoccupied with the micro-management of internal conflicts. This is ironical in view of the fact that the roots of most of the conflicts are structural and, therefore, cannot be managed via conflict-sensitive project interventions. On the other hand, any attempt to find structural solutions can pose even bigger threats to global and national capital, however sensible, reasonable and sustainable such solutions might be in the long run. For, such solutions necessitate painful sacrifices and significant lifestyle adjustments on the part of the global and national elites.

It is needless to say that the adoption of the neoliberal development model on a global scale leads to increasing competition for vital natural resources. The rapidly increasing demand for oil in such rapidly growing economies like China and India can only escalate the price of oil with adverse consequences, particularly for poorer countries. Already oil imports constitute the largest share of imports in many developing countries. The present market-led policies in many countries favour infrastructure developments that make these countries more and more oil dependent, even to provide public transport. Road construction often takes priority over railway lines (Amin 1997. 20). Liberal import of motor cars leads to severe traffic jams in the cities and towns, making public transport inefficient and unprofitable. Poor public transport services force more and more people to find private solutions, leading to an increasing demand for expensive imported oil.

Private investments in the social sector lead to a widening gap between private and public sector institutions in terms of the 'quality' of services provided. Due to inadequate public investments, publicly provided services decline in terms of availability and quality, and force more and more people to rely on the private sector. Consequently, cost of living escalates, forcing subsistence farmers and low-income-earning artisans to migrate to cities. Some migrate to other countries, both legally and illegally. Human smuggling is an organised criminal activity that is thriving under conditions of increasing global integration. Given the

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huge disparities between developed and developing countries, it is natural for poor people to look for income opportunities in the industrialised countries in Europe and elsewhere.

Disadvantaged groups dependent on poor quality public educational institutions cannot compete with those who receive their education in well-equipped private colleges and overseas universities. Public sector institutions, that traditionally employed poorly educated youth leaving public educational institutions, are no longer supposed to employ 'excess staff', thanks to structural adjustment programmes that are being implemented. Political leaders may take some of them from the back door in order to maintain their support base, but such actions alienate thousands more who are left out and remain unemployed. Frustrated youth provide militant political movements with a pool of readily recruitable activists and sympathisers.

How can we arrest the above trends? Given the fact that they are integrally linked to the structural transformation induced by neoliberal economic policies, the above trends cannot be dealt with without making significant policy shifts. In other words, superficial measures that are being pursued by global and Third World elites to promote good governance, conflict resolution, 'do-no-harm' approaches, etc, are unlikely to have a significant impact on structurally rooted conflicts in the developing world. What is also notable is that the structural inequities that give rise to unrest and conflicts not just persist but continue to grow. Such persisting gross inequities can only contribute to socio-political instability at all levels.

In spite of mounting evidence pointing to the unsustainability of market-led growth, the current development practice continues to be dominated by growth/profits/trade dynamic, perhaps reinforced by the prolonged global recession (Falk 1999; 19) The factors that contribute to the above mood are both complex and varied, that is, short-term interests of political leaders, the lure of consumerism, the perceived pre-eminence of the market, and societal concern about immediate economic pressure – jobs, growth, etc. (Ibid) These factors influence policy not merely in dependent and vulnerable developing societies but also in the developed industrial countries Given the increasing competition for resources and business opportunities among both developed and developing countries, it is pragmatism, not so much high ideals that determine policies and actions on a day-to-day basis Consequently, many global leaders and institutions pay lip-service to environmental and social concerns such as resource depletion, poverty, and conflict, but continue to operate within the neoliberal development model, which is, in fact, at the root of many of the issues concerned

Development, Order and Conflict

On the other hand, the emergent global order does not ensure security and well-being of large sections of the population in many parts of the world. The same global forces continue to erode the capacity of states to meet the needs of the majority of their citizens. Under these circumstances, more and more people have tended to find their own solutions by way of mass exodus, shadow economic activities, etc. Others have either been attracted to a variety of 'extremist forces [providing], if nothing else, a cause worth fighting for or surrendered entirely to cynical readings of human purpose. religious fanaticism, ultra-nationalism, ethnic hatred, warlordism, and large-scale criminality' (*Ibid* · 50).

What is increasingly clear from available evidence is that human security and well-being is undermined by structural forces from within and outside the states. This reality is concealed not only by ideas embodied in the notion of 'clash of civilisations' (Huntington 1993), but also by the postmodernist theory that denies the possibility of any coherent understanding of the current global processes which are subjected to scrutiny by the global media only by way of 'world business reports'. These reports usually talk about daily changes in the stock markets, business mergers, corporate profits, new consumer products, consumer demand, etc. On the other hand, business leaders and their political and intellectual collaborators do not usually step outside the 'market-growth-profit model' when they talk about the present and future well-being of people

In the absence of any global political arrangement to provide human security and basic human needs across national territorial boundaries, the state is the only political community that has the actual or potential capacity to address issues of security, well-being and dignity of people Yet, it is this capacity of the state which has come under enormous pressure in recent years. The declining capacity of the state to maintain public order and cater to the needs of citizens has undermined the modernist social contract between the state and society Many states in the developing world have declined in terms of their social and ethical standards, some degenerating to the level of corrupt, brutal dictatorships suppressing dissent, terrorising opposition and denying basic human rights to their citizens. In many cases, corrupt political elites have joined national and global business elites to reap personnel benefits, almost completely shirking their moral responsibility to devise sensitive national policies to regulate markets and cushion the vulnerable people against the ravages of the market The deteriorating political and social conditions compel professionally oriented middle-class people to leave their 580 Sırı Hettige

home countries and find employment and residence in the developed world where, unlike unskilled refugees and illegal migrants, they are often welcome with open arms. The continuing exodus of professionally qualified people results in a steady deterioration of public institutions such as hospitals, universities, schools, and planning agencies. These are the very institutions that the lower classes rely on for their own well-being and socioeconomic advancement.

Reaching a Point of No Return?

Most developing countries have already made the transition from being part of the state-centred, self-reliant model that they followed after World War II to being integrated into the new economic order guided by neoliberal ideas. Under the structural adjustment programmes that they have been persuaded to adopt, most of these countries have become extremely dependent on external markets, foreign direct investment, development assistance or credit, importation of vital inputs, including food, etc. As mentioned before, these countries are indebted to development-assistance agencies and foreign countries to varying degrees and are compelled to devote a major part of their export earnings for debt servicing. They have no choice but continue to borrow money in order to not only pay back the credit they have already taken but also to bridge the widening trade gap due to deteriorating terms of trade, arising out of the prevailing international division of labour.

How can the dependent and already heavily indebted developing countries modify policies that have been detrimental to economic sustainability and socioeconomic well-being of the majority of the people? Given the prevailing dominant economic orthodoxy, the structural changes that the economies have already undergone and the social structural changes that have taken place, any attempt on their part to move away from the neoliberal model is more than likely to be perceived as regressive, if not reactionary In other words, it seems virtually impossible for a developing country to go against the neoliberal agenda without facing serious consequences. This is particularly so because, unlike in the 1970's, today, there is little or no collective voice on the part of developing countries Moreover, the dominant players in the global economy, namely the G7 group of countries, are not in a mood to engage in a critical review of the neoliberal agenda. Their concern with poverty, indebtedness, environmental damage and human rights does not in any way alter their faith in, and the commitment to the liberal, marketoriented growth model. On the other hand, their capacity to guide the decision-making processes in global regulatory institutions such as the WTO, The World Bank and the IMF bestows upon them political privileges within a *de facto* global political community where the democratic conventions do not play any role. In other words, policies are adopted on a global level without being guided by democratic principles but are filtered down to individual states, which, in turn, are compelled to implement them and take full responsibility for their consequences

Today, many developing-country governments are facing the consequences of the policies they have adopted Yet, they do not have the capacity to safeguard the interests of their citizens who have been adversely affected They help rural peasants and artisans to leave rural livelihoods and join the mass exodus, to migrate to other countries to engage in manual work for higher wages. They cannot support public transport services, but allow the importation of all kinds of private transport equipment that leads to greater dependence on oil imports, environmental pollution, congestion in cities and towns and loss of productivity They cannot invest in low-income housing, so the poor squat almost everywhere, while big land developers build luxury condominium complexes with twenty-four-hour security for the new rich They cannot maintain public hospitals with adequate equipment and drugs, and the poor go around begging for donations with their doctors' prescriptions in hand, while the rich and the powerful visit five-star-type hospitals where they are treated by teams of local and foreign specialists. The list can be endless, but the point has already been made

It is doubtful whether any developing-country leader can turn his or her back to the new development orthodoxy Except in few countries where the regimes have guarded their borders with an iron fist, others have been subjected to external pressures to varying degrees But, the responses have not been identical across countries. In some countries, the rulers have maintained a judicious balance between liberalisation and protection, thereby having greater control over their economic fortunes and social conditions The cases in point are Malaysia, South Korea and India In these countries, relative political stability and a high degree of national pride have enabled them to adopt such a policy posture In others, leaders have willingly accepted the neoliberal model, lock, stock and barrel A case in point is Sri Lanka, where even a change of regime leading to a change of policy posture in public did not result in an actual change of policy, because the leaders did not see any feasibility for such a change In still others, the response has been an almost total abandonment of social and moral responsibility and use of political power for personal gains and self-aggrandisement A hopeless economic and social situation characterised by extreme poverty, lawlessness and institutional breakdown in some countries has created conditions under which poli582 Sırı Hettige

tical leaders have almost given up their national development projects. The African case described by Chabal and Daloz (1999) fits in to this type of response

What is evident from the above examples is that the developing countries have not responded to the neoliberal onslaught in an identical manner This is understandable given the fact that, even in the present fast globalising world, the only tangible political community is the state In other words, the state, however besieged and circumscribed it may be in the context of market and other forces that transcend its boundaries. still has the potential to provide the democratic and rational space in which rulers and the ruled can forge a contract between the state and society to deal with issues of security and public welfare. Such a contract may help maintain a certain level of vertical and horizontal solidarity based on minimum ethical, social, moral and ecological standards. Where the state has asserted itself to create the required national space. national leaders have been able to maintain at least minimum moral and social standards necessary to ensure relative peace and socio-political stability. When the state has remained aloof and allowed the market forces to operate freely, ethical and moral standards have given way to dehumanisation of society, shadow economies, criminality and social and political conflict. In the process, political elites have almost lost control over structural and cultural forces. Social and political conflicts become endemic, overshadowing mainstream political and economic processes Development practitioners can no longer do development work without paying attention to issues of peace and conflict

Conclusion

In the present paper, an attempt has been made to argue that the current preoccupation of the development practitioners and peace activists with issues of peace and conflict in the context of development is narrowly conceived and, therefore, it does not deal with the broader issues of development in the context of neoliberal economic reforms. While some of the roots of conflict and unrest can be traced back to periods preceding liberal economic reforms, the intensification of conflict is very much connected with post-liberalisation development. On the other hand, some of the conflicts and tensions are not only of a more recent origin but also of transnational in character. The targets of some of the most violent of the anti-systemic movements are the perceived architects of the neoliberal economic order. On the other hand, population groups that are adversely affected by neoliberal economic policies adopted by national governments, given the opportunity, use their votes to send home regimes that are closely identified with such policies. The election of

left-of-centre regimes in many developing and even developed countries is an indication of the disenchantment. On the other hand, increasing market pressure on political regimes everywhere persuades governments to adopt market-friendly, rather than people- and environment-friendly, policies in order to survive the competition for resources and market shares. The most hard-pressed in this regard are the dependent, heavily indebted, developing countries. Dependent on a few highly labour-intensive export commodities for export earnings, such countries remain highly vulnerable to external shocks like rapidly rising price of oil. Their capacity to provide welfare to already vulnerable segments of the population can be further eroded in such an eventuality. Agitations and conflicts over issues of resource distribution can be the order of the day

Therefore, to assume that internal conflicts and tensions can be defused by micro-managing externally funded development projects with a conflict-sensitivity is to ignore the wider context of development. This is not to deny the usefulness of planning and implementing development projects with a focus on possible adverse social impacts such as escalation of existing or potential conflicts, but to emphasise the fact that what one could do on a national level might be decisively influenced by forces emanating from the global centres The creation of an enabling environment for the states to take political and moral responsibility for ensuring public welfare can go a long way in maintaining peace and public order in developing countries The present signs are that the advocates of neoliberal development thinking in the north are unlikely to create such an enabling environment in the global south. Moreover, the developingcountry regimes are likely to come under greater market pressure in the near future and, therefore, are unlikely to have the capacity to resist such pressures Given such a scenario, any prospects for peace and social justice seem to depend on civil society activism, on both global and national levels. The absence of peaceful and effective civil society actions would open the floodgates for violent conflict with serious adverse consequences in the north as well as in the south

Notes

1 As Hayter puts it.

The [development assistance) agencies' policies presuppose a liberal form of economic organisation and adherence to international rules. They are based on the acceptance and upholding of the existing international and national framework of the capitalist world. International agencies cannot accept changes in the developing countries which might endanger existing patterns of international trade, foreign private investment, the regular serving and repayment of debts and other more or less general concerns of the capitalist developed and creditor countries (1971–51-52)

Peace and Conflict in the 'Frontier' Areas of North-east India

C. Nunthara

North-east India

'Frontier' has two meanings that of a region and a boundary (the furthermost edge of a free land) Frontier is thus a geographical region with peculiar sociological and cultural characteristics which are not found in the core areas of state control. From the perspective of expanding state and individuals who set out to conquer frontier, the frontier is essentially an empty space As such, state authorities either presume the land and natural resources at the frontier to be freely available, or arrogate the right to allocate them according to their needs and priorities Frontier is often considered a zone of legitimate intrusion, and indigenous peoples as undeserving of human compassion. In North-east India, particularly in Assam, progressive land laws such as Line System and Tribal Blocks and Belts were evolved to prioritise the rights of the indigenous people. Under the provisions of Assam Land Revenue Manuals of 1886, as amended in 1893, tribals were to be protected of their land. Rules, however, were respected more in violation than observance. In order to prevent the unauthorised occupation of reserved land and for the protection of tribal settlements, in 1920, the colonial administration introduced a Line System, where a line was drawn on a village map and no occupation of land by the immigrants beyond that line was allowed. The system had three categories of villages (i) open, where immigrants might freely stay, (11) close, where they were not permitted to stay; and (c) mixed, where they could be settled only in certain areas However, the government and bureaucrats lacked the political will to enforce them

The Line System was introduced mainly to preserve the rights of the tribes, but it was dispensed with under Saadullah's Government which came to power in November 1939 The official Line System Committee tours revealed that tribal villages were the victims of this unregulated encroachments by Mymensing immigrants Many tribal villages disappeared and their inhabitants moved into submontane zone (Das 1986) The tribal inhabitants moved further into the submontane zone In 1942, the Government of Assam came out with what has been known as Tribal Belts and Blocks in the submontane areas, where information was col-

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lected for all villages in which the proportion of tribals exceeded 50 percent and marked on maps Accordingly, Assam Land Revenue Regulation 1886 was amended in 1947 by adding Chapter X containing the provisions of Tribal Belts and Blocks. However, lack of political will to enforce the provisions and bureaucratic connivance in the process of implementation made the scheme self-defeating. Even the relative negotiating power of the parties involved was crucial in dispute settlement rather than legal facts Many of the local communities were ignorant of the law, and the aggrieved locals often had no other alternative than resorting to violent means of asserting their rights.

As such, frontier society and its state backers create conditions conducive to a high level of violent ethnic conflict over contested resources. Considered thus, the whole of the North-east comprises 'frontier' areas As Sanjib Baruah notes, North-east India is one of South Asia's last land frontiers and, through much of the twentieth century, these sparsely populated areas have attracted large-scale migration from the rest of the subcontinent (2004). The agenda of the state in North-east India, therefore, differs significantly from those it pursues in the core areas As organised and spontaneous migration turns this 'migratory frontier' into an arena of open violent conflict, the regulatory capacity of the state government is normally insufficient to contain it

Before 1962, North-east India was a land frontier attracting immigration from within and outside the country. James D Fearon and David Laitin (2001) argue that states sponsoring migration into frontier regions as an instrument of nation building generate conflicts. The Government of India has been extending institutions of the state as far as the international border for nationalising the frontier space. Ramachandra Guha (2001) observes that after 1962, the legacy of colonial policy of an Inner Line in certain tribal areas including Arunachal Pradesh has become so discredited that an opposition politician even suggested settling 100,000 farmers from Punjab in the North-east Frontier Area (NEFA) (Arunachal Pradesh) in order to assimilate the area into India.

In the process, tribal societies have been facing social and cultural disintegration and they stand no chance of protecting their autonomy and cultural integrity. Many post-colonial governments have been engaged in the same business of administrative subjugation of tribal peoples at their fringes as the colonial predecessors. India's North-east, Myanmar's tribal areas, West Borneo, Aceh and West Papua in Indonesia, and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh are cases where colonial regimes established full administrative control, and thus left their post-colonial successor governments a legacy of still open 'frontiers'

The 'North-east region' is a cluster of seven states along the northeastern international border of India Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura It shares international borders with countries such as China, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, and Bangladesh, and it has been receiving refugees from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Tibet, and Myanmar The region covers a combined area of 255,088 sq km (7 7 % of the country's territory) and 38,495,089 persons (3.74 % of the country's population) It is beset by ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity, with more than 160 scheduled tribes belonging to five different ethnic groups, besides diverse non-tribal population The cultural and ethnic composition became more complex as a result of the British policy of importing large numbers of administrators, accountants, plantation workers and cultivators from other parts of India The prevalence of instability, ethnic tensions, economic hardship and relative non-recognition of rights of minority communities in neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Tibet also force victims to seek refuge in eastern and north-eastern states of India. Reviewing the 'Trends in Sociological Research in North-east India', Nikhlesh Kumar (1998) observes:

- Less attention has been paid to the study of the societies living in the plains as compared to those living on the hills. We have a near total absence of studies on the structure of the Bodos, the Assamese, the Bengali societies in Assam as well as those living in Tripura and Manipur Studies have also been lacking on the many societies of Mizoram and Nagaland
- 11 These studies lack a comparative perspective Even the descriptive studies lack depth and do not have much heuristic value
- The research work has not focused on the intra-community and intercommunity conflicts and the mechanisms of adjustment in the region Thus, neither the elements of competition for resources nor the mechanisms of boundary maintenance by different societies could come out clearly in the studies on the ethnic unrest and protest movements
- IV Lastly, most of these works lack rigour in the application of sociological concepts and empirical methodology of the discipline Moreover, the practice of quantifying the data was also found to be quite uncommon

Thus, sociological research in North-east India lack rigour that it ought to have, but the issues addressed are relevant. Even the Institute for Conflict Management Database and Documentation, Guwahati, has come up with numerous articles. However, many of the academic works on crucial issues have been undertaken, not by sociologists, but by scholars from other social sciences.

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Since independence, there has been a growth of institutions of higher learning in North-east India Guwahati University was established in 1948, and it offered instruction in anthropology, but not sociology Dibrugarh University which came up in the mid-1960s started an independent department of sociology The second university (North-eastern Hill University) with sociology as academic discipline came up in 1976 at Shillong. Assam University at Silchar and Nagaland University at Kohima are also contributing to the teaching and research in Sociology The Anthropological Survey of India and the Tribal Research Institutes in various states contribute to the research on societies in North-east India Moreover, various research organisations organise seminars and workshops, and publish monographs, anthologies and project reports As such, there has been a proliferation of sociological research literature on the region, particularly since the 1980s. This literature covers tribal ethnography, customary laws, belief systems, social institutions, status of women and impact of various government-sponsored development schemes A number of publications on issues of identity crisis, conflict and protest movements of various kinds have appeared Some studies also try to offer causal analyses of these tensions and conflicts However, most of these lack empirical grounding and fail to give adequate explanation to the failure of peace accords

This paper makes a modest attempt to analyse the Bodo insurgency movement, an inter-ethnic violent confrontation, mainly as a result of the consequences of migration and demographic changes. It sees the failure of the first Bodo peace accord as a matter of mismatch between ethnic heterogeneity and the vision of territorial autonomy for a numerically minority Bodo people leading to adoption of terrorist strategies of ethnic cleansing to neutralise existing demographic imbalance. The basic research questions it seeks to answer are (a) What conditions gave rise to Bodo nativistic movement and contribute to perpetuate it? (b) What could be the reason for its violent nature and lack of single ethnic target? (c) What could be the reasons for the failure of the first Bodo Accord (1993) and why is the second Accord (2003) in an impasse?

Migration

Large-scale alienation of Bodo land started when large areas within the Bodo dominated areas were converted into tea plantation during the colonial rule under Wasteland Grants Rule, 1838 The tea plantation labourers settled within and in the vicinity of the plantation land However, the British administration, and later the Assam Government, provided tea-tribes, notably Santals, settlers-with-land titles The colonial

regime allowed tea-garden coolies to take up wasteland for cultivation Even coolies on tea-garden muster rolls carried on some cultivation and, in 1920-21, they held 100,728 acres of land as tenants and 15,847 acres as direct-settlement-landholders.

Thus, the process of migration started with plantation labour from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh to meet needs of the European tea-planters. Starting in 1853, migration on a large-scale took place from 1860 to 1937. Tea-garden labourers were on contract basis and were expected to return to their original homes on the termination of their contracts. But the labourers found it convenient to settle near the tea-garden as cultivators. In 1891, the total number of these migrants was estimated at 423,199, which went up to 654,000 in 1901 and, with the expansion of tea gardens after two decades, to a million and a half or 30 percent of the total population. After 1931, importation of labourers slowed down, and it was totally stopped by 1941 (Barpujari 1998, 34).

The second stream of migrants consisted of Muslim peasants from East Bengal districts of Mymensing, Pabna, Bogra, and Rongpur Before 1900, few migrants from East Bengal crossed the boundary to settle down in the *char* or riverine lands of Brahmaputra However, the pressure on soil in their home districts, and the availability of cheap, plentiful and fertile lands on easy terms in Assam in place of expensive and uncomfortable holdings as sub-tenants in Bengal drove migrants, particularly from Mymensing from the beginning of the twentieth century. The third stream of migrants consisted of Bengali Hindu refugees mostly from the then Sylhet district to the adjoining areas of Assam and Tripura as a result of partition. During 1911-21, migrant communities occupied all the four districts of Brahmaputra valley. In Goalpara, they formed 20 percent of the population and 14 percent, in Nagaon. In Darrang, they penetrated along the Brahmaputra, while in Kamrup, parties searching land were found near Bhutan border.

The Brahmaputra Valley consists of three belts the Chapori or riverine belt, the central belt, and the submontane belt. The Chapori belt is a large belt of alluvium on both sides of the channel. Though habitable, almost the entire belt remained unused and uncultivated, as the indigenous people did not cultivate the land. This is the low valley floor Furthermore, the level of the valley rises to central belt on both sides, which the indigenous peoples used for habitation and cultivation. Beyond this belt comes the submontane belt, at the foot of the hills on both sides. The extensive Chapori belts attracted the immigrant cultivators.

The Census Superintendent (1951) remarked that their hunger for land was so great that, in the eagerness to grasp as much as land as they could cultivate, they not infrequently encroached on government reserves

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and on lands belonging to the local people from which they could only be evicted with great difficulty CS. Mullan, the Census Superintendent (1931) observed, 'where there is waste land, thither flock the Mymensinghias' The immigrants first swamped the char areas of the Brahmaputra which were virtually unoccupied, and from there they started squatting on the government reserves, and even occupied the tribal land During those days, most of the tribals used to live in the strip between the north bank and the submontane areas on the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh The tribals in Assam, by and large, did not like the presence of unknown outsiders near their habitation, and when they found that vacant land adjacent to their villages were occupied by people differing from them linguistically, religiously and ethnically, they abandoned their villages and went deeper into the submontane areas Sometimes their villages were forcibly occupied by the immigrants and consequently the tribals had to leave their homestead J.H. Hutton, Census Commissioner of India (1931) admitted that they could not be evicted without great difficulty

As the urgency of the problem of unauthorised occupation of land assumed a serious nature, the British devised a means and applied it as early as 1920 a line was drawn on the village map taking care of the interest of the people inhabiting the village, and no occupation of land by the immigrants beyond that line was allowed. This was the line system applied to cover districts of Lower Assam. As stated earlier, it had three categories: open, close, and mixed villages. However, the Line System, introduced with so much good intention, could not solve the problem of unauthorised occupation and encroachment of land by immigrants. Even close villages were found to have been encroached. As noted earlier, the tribal villagers continued to be the worst victims.

Thus, in 1939, the Congress-coalition Government of Assam headed by Gopinath Bordoloi came out for the first time with the concept of tribal belts and blocks. But it could not materialise, as the Bordoloi Ministry had to resign when the Quit India movement was launched. A Ministry headed by Sir Muhammad Saadullah came to power and reversed the policy Saadullah introduced a Development Scheme according to which all wastelands were to be divided into blocks and allotted to different communities including immigrants. This policy further aggravated the situation, since many immigrants were given settlements even in the areas predominantly inhabited by tribals, including tribal ancestral homes. Saadullah's policy was to open more land for the immigrants, and his Ministry openly encouraged large-scale migration (Bhattacharya 2001).

Saadullah's Ministry fell in 1941, and Sir Robert Reid, the Governor took over the administration and hastily scrapped Saadullah's Development Scheme. The Governor's observation was that the immigrants could not squat indiscriminately all over the province. He further observed that 'the tribal classes particularly viewed without favour the close approach of Eastern Bengal immigrants to their villages. In the interest of peace and good government, fresh settlement of immigrants should be in close proximity to their old settlements so that their presence in tribal areas might be avoided' (quoted in Bordoloi 1991. 80). But Saadullah came back to power in 1942 and immediately revived his Development Scheme.

Thus came a second major group of settlers, the landless Muslim Bengalis from East Pakistan (Bangladesh) The large-scale grabbing of flood-prone riverine belts by the immigrants was not initially opposed by the indigenous people. The total number of settlers in the Brahmaputra Valley was estimated to be 300,000 in 1921 Census and over 500,000 in 1931. They pressed themselves in all directions from the riverine base, and started occupying land held by the indigenous people, giving rise to conflict between the indigenous people and the Muslim immigrants. The growth of Muslim population, according to Bhattacharya (2001), is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Growth of Muslim population in Assam

Year	Population
1871	86,193
1901	5,05,197
1911	6,30,635
1921	8,67,795
1931	12,66,243
1941	16,96,978
1951	19,81,857
1961	27,42,295
1971	35,92,124
1991	83,73,204

Source Bhattacharya (2001 87)

The extent of land alienation due to tea cultivation and immigration (of both Santals and Muslims) in the closing years of nineteenth century and early twentieth century is shown in Table 2. This was what, in fact, forced the colonial administration to devise a Line System to restrict indiscriminate settlement of immigrants on lands held by the indigenous people. The Line System was strongly opposed by the immigrants and the

Year	Area under	Land settled
	tea cultivation	with immigrants
	(in acres)	(in acres)
1881	71,000	14,000
1891	1,31,000	52,200
1901	2,10,000	1,31,000
1911	2,35,000	2,11,200
1921	2,70,000	4,45,700
1931	2,86,000	7,97,800

Table 2 Extent of land alienation

Source Annual reports on Tea Culture for respective year from 1881-1931, and an account of the Province of Assam and its Administration, Government of Assam, 1903, Reports of the Land Revenue Administration of Assam for respective years from 1901-1931

government was unable to evict illegal occupation. The system only brought golden opportunity to the corrupt revenue officials to earn easy money by tampering the alignments of lines on maps and giving pattas (ownership rights to land) to the immigrants beyond the areas reserved for them

Thus, in 1945, the government ordered that all the villages in which the proportion of tribal classes of people exceeded 50 percent over the total population should be marked on the map, and Tribal Belts and Blocks may be constituted in the submontane area. This regulation was amended through the Assam Land and Revenue Regulations (Amendment) Act, 1964, 1981 and 1990. Thus, Tribal Belts and Blocks, as envisaged to be a possible tool for protection of tribal land expressed under Bordoloi Ministry, became a reality In accordance with the new provisions, altogether 35 Belts and Blocks (11 Belts and 24 Blocks) covering 3,112 villages with an area of 12,059,378 bighas (16,07,917 hectares) were created In 1977, another 11 Tribal Belts and Blocks (3 Belts and 8 Blocks) were created, making a total of 14 Belts and 32 Blocks covering an area of 1,285,160 bighas (1,713,000 hectares) However, restriction on ownership and transfer of land in the Tribal Belts and Blocks provided in the regulations was not observed by all the revenue officials, immigrant community and the indigenous people. Illegal transfer of tribal land to ineligible persons through sale, lease, mortgage and encroachment within the belts and blocks continued unabated At a recent conference of the North-east India Emarat-e-Shariah and Nawatut Tameer in Assam on 7 (February 2005), the State Revenue Minister Goutam Roy promised granting pattas to more migrants who have settled in the char areas

The third category of immigrants was Hindu refugees from East Pakistan (Bangladesh) mainly as a result of failure in nation building According to Partha Ghosh (2001), the denial of democratic right to East Pakistan-based Awaami League to form government following the general elections of 1970 sharpened the division between East and West Pakistan. The people of East Pakistan pitted Bengali nationalism against Pakistani (Punjabi) nationalism The Bangladesh liberation movement caused massive exodus of East Pakistanis to India an estimated ten million refugees arrived in India After the assassination of Mujibur Rehman in 1975, the communal situation deteriorated and the Hindus felt insecure and migrated to India The extent of this was estimated to be 1.22 million during 1974-81 and about 173,000 during the inter-census period of 1981-1991 (*Ibid*) These migrants settled themselves in eastern and north-eastern states, notably in Assam and Tripura.

Thus, a survey conducted by Atul Goswami, Homeswar Goswami and Andil Saikia (2004) comes up with rough estimates of inter-state and international migrants (see Table3) They record that persons born elsewhere in India usually reported their place of birth correctly, because every citizen has the right to move anywhere within the country But those foreign migrants who have entered Assam illegally would never disclose their actual place of birth to avoid possible punitive action Thus, legal foreign migrants reporting their place of birth is estimated at 685,001, and illegal foreign migrants is estimated at 1,298,754

Goswami, Goswami and Saikia have also come up with the total effect of migrants on the growth of Assam's population during the same period (1951-1991), taking into account the offspring of the migrants (that is, those who by birth became the citizens of India) till 1986 (See Table 4)

According to All Bodo Students Union President Narzary Rabiram, the land lost in claimed Bodoland area due to encroachment or otherwise is as follows

- Lost to plantation. 10,000 *bigha*s in Kokrajhar district, and 28,000 *bigha*s in claimed Bodoland area
- 11 Lost to unprotected class 40,000 *bigha*s in Kokrajhar district, and 95,000 *bigha*s in claimed Bodoland area
- 111 Lost to protected class 11,000 *bigha*s in Kokrajhar district, and 30,000 *bigha* in claimed Bodoland area

The distribution of Scheduled Tribes as reflected in Census of India 1991 and 2001 is presented in Table 5. We can easily see a gradual decline of tribal percentage against the total population in all the districts of Lower Assam causing a demographic imbalance.

Table 3	Composition	of migrants.	Interstate and	international
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Decade	Inter-state migrants (A)	Total estimated migration (B)	International migrants (C=B-A)
1951-61	2,60,636	10,56,228	7,95,592
1961-71	3,40,476	9,02,065	5,61,589
1971-91	2,90,625	9,17,199	6,25,574
Total	8,91,737	2,875,492	19,82,755

Source Goswami, Goswami and Saikia (2004 137)

Table 4 Migrants and their offspring Assam, 1951-91

Decade	Migrants and their	Births	Deaths	Number
	offspring			of
	(cumulative)			migrants
1951-61	1,067,846	484,802	2,87,251	1,97,551
1961-71	2,067,277	911,669	4,05,186	5,06,483
1971-81	3,062,245	1,012,072	4,55,968	5,56,104
1981-91	4,915,058	1,361,415	5,53,190	8,08,225
Total	1,11,12,426	3,769,958	17,01,595	20,68,363

Source Goswami, Goswami and Saikia (2004 138)

Table 5 Distribution of Scheduled Tribes, 1991 and 2001

District	1991	2001	
	(%)	(%)	
Dhubri	2 41	2 00	
Kokrajhar	41 15	33 70	
Bongaigaon	17 53	12 20	
Goalpara	17 23	16 00	
Barpeta	7 97	7 50	
Nalbarı	17 67	17 60	
Kamrup	10 71	9 90	
Darrang	17 32	16 60	

Source Census of India, 1991 and 2001

Bodo Movement and Autonomy

The present Bodo insurgent movement was, to a certain extent, the inexorable result of the partition of Assam under Assam Reorganisation and North-eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) demanded the 'fifty-fifty' division of Assam, though Bodos constitute a small percentage of the total population The reaction of the Assam Gana Parishad AGP (the ruling party) leadership, the neglect of ABSU leadership and the Chief Minister's remark that 'We will shed every drop of blood to prevent fragmentation of Assam' infuriated the young ABSU leaders and led them to the path of violence

It is often acknowledged that Bodos do not wish to live along with other people, thereby forcing the latter to further migrate to interior Bhutan border in the submontane zone as the volume and magnitude of migration from Bangladesh increased. The migrant community used to own land in the Tribal Belts and Blocks, whereas the tribals who used to cultivate land and settled in the forest villages have been not only denied the right of ownership of land, but also some of them have been evicted. All these have made Bodos feel unsafe and insecure

During the 1950s, Tribal Sangha was established by some politicians and social workers. It was able to unite the educated youth and older generation on a common platform. However, its impact on the larger Bodo society was not felt. It was then that Bodo Sahitya Sabha was established in late the 1950s. The aim was to upgrade the Bodo language and to bring about cultural resurgence. This was followed by the establishment of a political party – Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) – with a demand for carving out Udayachal as a Union Territory. A mass movement was organised in Udalguri, Kokrajhar and other Bodo dominated areas. Its leaders were arrested and tortured under S.C. Sakia's government, and the movement suffered a setback

The crushing of the movement and the treatment met out to its leaders provoked a feeling of hatred and enmity against the Assamese in general. Then came the All Assam Students Union (AASU) movement, popularly known as the Assam movement. Initially, the Bodo students participated in the Assam movement. But there was an ideological rift between the AASU leaders and the Bodo student leaders. The Bodo students then formed the ABSU headed by Upen Brahma. They sought

- self-rule for themselves.
- 11 restraint on unlawful habitation in their areas,
- iii allocation of a bigger share in the development funds,
- iv driving out undesirable human elements, either lawfully or by force;
- v. control over economic, social, and political exploitation of their people by other privileged ones, and
- vi all constitutional benefits of their people and redressal of their rampant unemployment problem

The true motive of ABSU leaders was to regain their lost position by demanding a separate Bodoland state. The eviction of Bodo settlements in the forest areas, while allowing non-tribals encroachments into the

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Tribal Belts and Blocks by the successive governments and the AGP government's attempt to impose Assamese language as the third compulsory language for all school students in Assam infuriated them Since they perceived that the state government would not easily concede to their demand, they had taken recourse to violence from the start The PTCA opposed the ideals and methods of ABSU. In the mean time, S K Basumatary, the then MLA from Udalguri, formed a new political party. United Tribal National Liberation Front (UTNLF) Both the PTCA and the UTNLF were opposed to the division between the tribals in general and Bodos of Assam on political grounds as drawn by the ABSU Nonetheless, the ABSU tried to supersede both the PTCA and the UTNLF in terms of mass-based public support, and intensified violent activities. It has been reported that members of the PTCA and the UTNLF were abducted and killed by the ABSU The PTCA and the UTNLF, therefore, opted for an extremist organisation in the name of Bodo Security Force (BrSF) initially to protect and safeguard their members. In course of time, the BrSF became more dreaded than the ABSU.

The origin of BrSF has been traced by Barpujari (1998) to the Special Security Bureau (SSB) created by the union government to resist the aggressions beyond the border in the wake of the Chinese invasion in 1962. The BrSF soon became a terror with its knowledge of the topography of the land and extensive intelligence, and by its surprise attacks and ambushes demanding sovereign Bodoland. What followed was an almost contest-like terrorist activity between the two militant outfits targeting the government and public and railway infrastructure, deliberately sabotaging the communication lines between the North-east and the rest of India

In 1990, on the death of ABSU President Upen Brahma, the situation took a new turn The ABSU leadership did not seem to have the zeal and ability to carry on the operations. The movement thus gradually slipped out of their hands to the BrSF. The Bodo Accord (1993), signed between the ABSU leadership and the Union Minister of State for Home, was a face-saving device for the ABSU The Accord was signed without properly determining the jurisdiction of the Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC) This was the main reason for its failure The failure to implement the Accord was responsible for the large-scale ethnic cleansing, which resulted in the loss of many lives of the immigrant communities and not less than 70,000 people were rendered homeless in 1993-94

The ABSU revived the statehood movement in February 1996 and demanded the scrapping of the Bodo Accord (1993) Ethnic riots broke out between the Bodos and the Adivasis (Santhals) in which hundreds lost their lives and over 250,000 were rendered homeless. The Bodo

Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) was formed in June 1996 by a section of the surrendered Bodo volunteers (militant wing of ABSU) demanding a separate Bodoland state The BLTF also became an active partner of the BrSF in the ethnic cleansing operations

In July 1999, the BLTF called for ceasefire to initiate peace talks, which ultimately led to the second Bodo Accord (2003) The National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) (a new name of the Bodo Security Force) accused the BLTF and the ABSU for 'unilaterally' signing the Accord with the centre and the state governments, as neither the NDFB nor the Bodo population were taken into confidence before signing the Accord It, thus, neither welcomed nor totally rejected the new Accord and the new Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) But, neither the non-tribals nor the tribal groups are happy with the creation of BTC

Demographic imbalance resulting from the ineffective implement-tation of protective laws such as Line System and Tribal Belts and Blocks reduced the Bodo population vis-à-vis immigrant settlers in the north bank of Brahmaputra valley to a minority, giving rise to socio-economic and political contradictions. A basic structural precondition for territorial autonomy – which the Bodo movement seeks to achieve when it calls for an autonomous state outside Assam – is the concentration of the population in question in a particular area, which in the case of Bodos is ambiguous. All the political parties of Assam also reiterate that demarcation of autonomous areas should be on the basis of at least fifty percent population of tribes concerned residing in a given autonomous area and that the interests of the non-tribals must be protected

Concentrated in an area lying between Sonkosh river of Dhubri district and Orang river in Darrang district, the Bodo-claimed area includes the districts of Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta and Nalbaii, the Rangia sub-division of Kamrup district, and the northern side of Darrang district There are twenty-three development blocks where the tribal population is concentrated The major theoretical challenge we should like to test here is the problem posed by Shaheen Mozaffar and James R Scarritt that

When the population seeking autonomy has to share the territory with other ethnic groups of substantial demographic strength, when in-migration had reduced it to a numerical minority, and when the area it dominates numerically do not form a contiguous territory, territorial autonomy is not a feasible solution to ethnic conflict (1999)

How far this has implication for the invasion of the frontier areas by the immigrant inflow, the neglect of the marginal people living in frontier

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region by the state, and setting conditions for Accord implementation and success?

To trace the emergence of the indigenous middle class, a brief recap of the development of western education among the Bodos may be in order here. Adherents of Brahma religion launched social reform programmes, particularly of western education. They urged the British government for more schools in the Bodo dominated areas. In spite of resistance to this religion in certain circles, the fact remains that the Bodo elite of the present day emerging middle class are largely drawn from this religious group. Christianity also made its entry into the Bodo inhabited areas. Many Bodos had taken refuge in Aryan philosophy and Hindu religion. Some are giving up tribal identity. But the Church-imparted western education and made them realise their own worth. Thus, the educated middle class consists mainly of those drawn from the Brahma and the Christian religious groups.

The educated middle class developed a fear that immigrants (Muslims) and infiltrators from across the border would soon reduce them to a small minority in their own land. They strongly felt that they are being alienated in their own homeland. It was thus the middle-class members who led the Udayachal movement and, later, the ABSU movement. The fluctuating political programme of the movement seem to be guided by autonomy movements in other north-eastern areas such as the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), Mizo National front (MNF) and other movements with varying demands a sovereign Bodoland outside India, a full-fledged Bodoland state within India, and territorial autonomy for Bodos within Assam. The support each of these gets is shown in Table 6.

Area	BTC		BTC or State		Sovereign Bodoland	
	Strongly support	Moderately support	BTC support	State support	Moderately support	Not support
Udalgurı	2 (1 10)	183 (98 90)	(1 10)	183 (98 90)	30 (16 22)	155 (83 78)
Gossaigaon	287 (97 94)	5 (2 06)	9 (3 08)	283 (96 92)	4 (1 37)	288 (98 63)

Table 6 Support given to different phases of the Bodo movement

Source Survey conducted by the author during 2003 with financial assistance from the National Centre for Competence in Research, Switzerland

The radical stage of the movement was immediately followed by bandhs, bomb blasts, and the destruction of public buildings, railway tracks, and bridges resulting in the disruption of communication and

movement of essential supplies to and from North-east India The Assamese civil officers and police personnel were made to leave Bododominated areas and the government extended Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (1937) against the ABSU. The creation of BrSF, initially a mass-based organisation, in 1986, to liberate Bodoland for distinct identity and civilisation of the Bodos resulted in dual militant organisations. The fact that the two militant organisations – the BrSF from Udalguri area, and the ABSU volunteers, later the Bodo Liberation Tiger, from Kokrajhar district – have different modes of encounters with immigrant groups and infiltrators is also apparent from the villagers' attitude towards ethnic others (see Table 7)

Area	Tea-tribes (Santhals)			Muslims (Bangladeshis)		
	Favou- rable	Unfavou- rable	Most unfavou- rable	Favou- rable	Unfavou- rable	Most unfavou- rable
Udalgurı	163	22	-	3	57	125
	(88 10)	(11 90)		(1 63)	(30 81)	(67 56)
Gossaigaon	200	92	-	16	244	32
	(68 49)	(31 51)		(5 82)	(83 22)	(10 96)

Table 7 Attitudes towards ethnic others

Source Survey conducted by the author during 2003 with financial support from the National Centre for Competence in Research, Switzerland

Muslims from Bangladesh are found to be unwanted guests in both areas, and Santhals in Gossaigaon (Kokrajhar) are not as acceptable as they are in Udalguri. These findings may have some bearing on pathways and boundaries, the multiple relationships between the Bodos and other ethnic aggregations. In Dansiri village in Udalguri sub-division, 90 percent of cultivable land is owned by the migrant community, and the Bodos work on their land as landless labourers. Likewise, all the twenty-one mills in Udalguri town are exclusively owned by the Marwaris, and none of them employ the local youth. This can be shown as the different modes of development of asymmetrical pathway relationship. It is true that, in frontier situation, indigenous communities and outsiders (settlers) are competing for natural resources, but they are not always plainly antagonistic, as relationships between contending parties also include cooperative elements (pathways) as against boundaries

The reasons for Bodo movement are complex The main contributing factors fall under three categories

(1) Failure of legal barriers to prevent the alienation of Bodo land by outsiders The Line System devised by the colonial administration only brought golden opportunity to the revenue officials to earn easy 600 C Nunthara

money by tampering the alignments of lines on maps and giving *pattas* to the immigrants beyond the areas reserved for them. The regulations pertaining to the tribal belts and blocks restricting ownership and transfer of land was not observed by revenue officials, immigrants and the indigenous peoples themselves

- (2) Failure of Assamese nationalists to assuage the Bodo fears of further economic marginalisation and cultural assimilation. This is what makes the movement lacking in single ethnic target. In some phases, ethnic violence focuses all energy on tea-tribes, as it happened in 1996, leading to violent clashes. In other instances, it may be directed at immigrant Muslims. However, the relative neglect of tribal problems by the Assam government and the way the government was formed favouring the Assamese middle-class members, have shifted the targeted groups in many instances to Assamese community in general
- (3) Military training provided by Special Security Bureau to Bodos This probably was done in order to neutralise and channelise the ethnic violence in Assam and, possibly, in the entire North-east India, and to prevent what happened during the Chinese invasion in 1962 and the Bangladesh war in 1971

The political aspirations of Bodo leaders have also been shaped by the Indian example of granting territorial autonomy to resurgent minority peoples in North-east India, such as Nagaland and Mizoram However, this does not seem to be a feasible solution to ethnic conflict when the claimed territory is shared with other major ethnic groups and inmigration leads to numerical minoritisation, and the areas dominated numerically are not contiguous. Thus, the mismatch between demographic reality and the vision of territorial autonomy is the main reason for the intractability of the Bodo problem. The territorial claimed area -Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) and Bodo Territorial Council (BTC) - has less than 50 percent of tribal population. The claimed area is inhabited by other tribals such as Rabhas, Mechas, Miris, Hojais, Deoris, and Saraniyas, and such non-tribal communities as Koch-Rajbongshis, Scheduled Castes and caste Hindus and Muslims (both original and immigrants), Santals, Mundas, Nepalis, Biharis, and Marwaris - forming a substantial portion of the population Census of India 1991 showed that this area had an approximate tribal population of 34 41 percent. This has been reduced further to less than 30 percent in 2001. It is considered to have about 2,494 villages, of which 300 villages are pure tribal villages. and 821 tribal-dominated villages (having more than 50 percent tribal population), leaving 1,313 villages in which the tribal population is less than 50 percent (Sarma 1997) Moreover, the Bodo-dominated villages numbering 1,613 do not form a contiguous territory

Granting autonomy in order to increase the governing powers of a minority group is often associated with carving up of territorial units, though autonomy may also take non-territorial forms. In order to avoid creation of new minorities within a minority many have opted for nonterritorial autonomy This may be called 'cultural autonomy' involving group self-administration of cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious matters of a minority group (Lapidoth 1997) There are people who argue that minority groups who are highly mobilised politically can obtain high level of representation without formal autonomy structures under electoral system of proportional representation (Sartori 1994) However, studies tend to argue that the success of autonomy in promoting stability is context-specific, dependent upon interactions inherent in each case Advocates of autonomy argue that the establishment of autonomous institutions provides transparency to the decision-making process of minority groups, facilitating exchange of information and predictability of their activities Since lower levels of information can lead to suspicion and conflict, greater transparency should reduce conflict (Rothchild and Hartzell 1999)

The Indian state has had a primary military response to the conflict in the North-east. The presence of the Indian army has come under severe criticism from human rights organisations (MASS 2003) Accounts of rape, torture and other deplorable actions are not enhancing India's reputation, and because of the frontier nature of the region, they have been detached from democratic institutions and norms prevalent in other parts of the country The military personnel enjoy impunity because of security laws like Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 This is in the process of being reviewed. Since the 1962 Chinese aggression, the Government of India has embarked upon a policy of aggressive militarisation and development of North-east India (Verghese 1996) Conflict resolution measures are sporadic, and they include accords and agreements with militant groups Wherever an ethnic group is promised any form of autonomy, particularly territorial autonomy, there will remain others who will be aggrieved by that arrangement Autonomy as a conflict-resolution and peace measure in the case of Bodos seems to have worsened the relations between the Bodos and others who are sharing the same space

Thus, Barpujari observes

The political aspirations of some of the homogeneous groups could have been fulfilled by a thorough amendment of the relevant provisions of the Sixth Schedule or by constitutional amendments 73rd and 74th for devolution of more powers to panchayats and local bodies. It is vain to expect that the grant of autonomy will keep the unity and integrity of the State

What is the guarantee that the 'Karbis and the Bodos (even accorded full autonomy) will not clamour for full-fledged statehood? How can the Union and State government resist legitimate and forceful claims of the Koch-Rajbanshis and Tai-Ahoms who ruled the valley of Brahmaputra till the eve of British occupation? Will the tea-tribes and pockets of immigrants Muslims remain silent spectators of the scene? (1998 105-06)

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Gross National Happiness

Karma Ura

Introduction

It is perhaps useful to start by trying to establish happiness (or subjective well-being in western literature) as the main value. Is it feasible or desirable? After that has been done, it might be applied as a central value on the institutional structures and processes of governance. The institutional structures and processes of a society must reflect the main values it tries to promote, and if happiness is one of the main values it holds or aspires to hold, then the institutions being built must incorporate happiness at the centre of their norms. So, the implications of promoting happiness as a dominant value of a society should be traced through its institutions and processes. Contemporary measures of progress do not usually specify happiness as a dominant end, it is assumed to be the collateral result of social and economic policies.

Establishing Happiness as a Dominant Value in Comparison with GDP

Evidences on desirability and feasibility of happiness as the dominant goal of a society can be considered by drawing on the findings of upsurge of contemporary happiness research. For this purpose, the main views on happiness as dominant end can be summarised. The first two of the five reasons cited indicate the complexities in defining happiness and its determinants, but they are not grounds for rejecting happiness as a dominant value. The subsequent reasons show the desirability of happiness as a dominant value.

First reason is that happiness (or utility, as it is known in economics) as a dominant end is the critical assumption of microeconomics. In microeconomics, the starting hypothesis is that choices or decisions made by individuals are motivated by maximisation of happiness (or utility or satisfaction) If we go by this assumption, individuals are supposed to maximise utility (or happiness or satisfaction) along a given set of preferences (utility function) All that people are purported to be is a set of preferences that are determined completely and mechanically by their reactions to external conditions. This behavioural assumption is a part of a deterministic, formal framework and it is not based on empirical

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evidence Moreover, its portrayal of link between preference, choice, and happiness has been criticised as being incomplete

The case to establish happiness as the main dominant end of individuals cannot be based entirely on rational utility maximisation principle for the following reasons that are usually cited against the rational utility maximisation principle

- 1 people do not have well-defined values and choices,
- ii individuals have free will,
- iii the kind of happiness portrayed in rational utility maximisation principle can be irresponsible and ego-centric happiness,
- iv the kind of happiness portrayed is a solipsist concept of happiness, being based on subjective hedonistic principle rather than inter-subjective or relational emotion,
- v people make mistakes in everyday situations while choosing among alternatives,
- vi what people choose is not always what gives them happiness. Conversely what gives happiness is not what has been chosen, and
- vii individuals are not the only entities who make choices or decisions

Second reason Happiness may not be the only dominant end, as there are other values that have to be sought even though it leads to sacrifice of happiness. There are other factors that at least diminish happiness as the dominant value in a society. These factors may include

- people consciously make decisions that do not maximise happiness, due to sacrifices, commitment and integrity,
- people derive satisfaction from relative, not absolute consumption, which is contrary to an important criterion in neo-classical welfare economics,
- people give considerable weight to socially and culturally established criterion of success than happiness,
- iv happiness is a matter also of free judgement that people make on the impact of the past events on current life, and
- v meaning of choice and preference may differ among individuals between individualistic and collectivist societies

Third reason But disapproving that rational utility maximisation principle does not necessarily mean that individuals are not motivated to seek happiness as a dominant end. Nor do all the complications that were mentioned challenge happiness as the main motivating factor in their behaviour. Arguments and evidences can be explored to establish that people do seek happiness as a dominant end but it may be a slightly different kind of happiness. A different kind of happiness as a dominant

end could be a worthy happiness, responsible happiness, or happiness we value. This kind of happiness must be happiness which is inseparable from the reason for which we pursue it. This kind of happiness results from a reflective mind that sees itself morally, and goes beyond the self it is a relational concept of happiness, as opposed to purely solipsistic concept of happiness.

Fourth reason A broader concept of well-being like happiness may be a better indicator of social welfare in conjunction with existing indicators such as HDI or GDP or the various versions of Sustainable Development Index Elements that conventional indexes neglect would be captured in a certain composite or single item index measuring happiness as a holistic indicator of well-being. The main serious deficiencies of the current index, GDP, is summarised as follows:

- its increase has not been matched by proportionate rise in subjective well-being,
- it was not intended or designed as a broader indicator of well-being (Kuznets intended it to be a quantitative aggregation of market value of goods and services),
- iii it measurement is biased towards consumption, and it does not estimate depreciation of social, environmental and human capitals,
- iv it does not make qualitative distinctions in the mix of economic activeties.
- v it does not value social and economic services of households and families, and
- vi it does not value free time and leisure

These weaknesses also point to what might be desirable features of a new indicator of well-being such as happiness

Fifth reason From the point of view of Buddhist social science, the causes and conditions leading to unhappiness and stress (suffering) has been systematically studied But mental awakening and the realisation away from the causes and conditions of unhappiness is the main approach to happiness at an individual level. In keeping with interdependence of all things, awakening emphasises the qualities like compassion and loving kindness, pointing to the fact that source of happiness is inter-subjective, and is deeply related to the quality of relationship to contribute meaningfully to the alleviation of unhappiness of one another

The main point being highlighted here is that social science influenced by Buddhist tradition is concerned seriously with alleviation of factors that sponsor unhappiness and stress (suffering) Such a view stresses the following points

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individual development for compassion is theoretically possible, but it is theoretically not so according to rational maximisation principle,

- in happiness cannot be found in ever increasing consumption. But detachment from proliferation of wants can contribute to happiness. It lead logically to the possibility of considering non-consumption as a sign of progress. Current economies are, however, biased towards proliferation of wants,
- 111 right means to right happiness, and
- iv interdependence of social, economic and environmental realities

General conclusion. All of the above reasons point to happiness as arguably and clearly one of the dominant ends. Therefore, social and welfare policy must be concerned with happiness, and happiness has to be a criterion of welfare and public policy. Towards this end, techniques and methods, however imperfect, must be developed to measure and monitor the conditions and causes leading to happiness. Happiness alone cannot be the arbiter of public policy. Public discourse is essential for making public policy. But people would make judgement on impacts of public policy using happiness as a yardstick of accountability. At the same time, the structures and processes of governance must consciously create space for happiness as the shared value to be realised.

Institutions in Relations to Happiness

Assuming that Bhutanese polity is relatively new for some participants at the Workshop, a fleeting introduction to the institutional context follows Bhutan is an old state, unified and founded in 1652, in pursuit, in principle, in the tradition of Buddhism, dedicated to the welfare and enlightenment of all sentient beings. At least, that was the theoretical justification for its foundation, and that theoretical underpinning suggested that it was a Buddhist State. As the state remained in independent existence, and was fortuitously left out of events of great significance such as World Wars, its historical experience has been an exception to those South Asian nations around it

In 1907, the Bhutanese people established monarchy for the purpose of stability and security Since the early 1960s, Bhutan has been what one may describe in both theoretical and practical terms as a 'development state', pursuing political, social and economic programmes of change like many developing countries. What it implies in political terms is that the legislative and policy centrality of the Throne has been increasingly relinquished voluntarily to the other institutions and organs of the state which are themselves being created at the initiative of the Throne. Thus, there is a broad process of democratisation and devolu-

tion, illustrated by introduction of indirectly elected cabinet, election of district and county council members by secret ballots and so forth

Since the 1980s, the Bhutanese Government has increasingly adopted another framework for governance, which has come to be known as gross national happiness, or GNH In effect, the concept of gross national happiness has been promulgated as the ultimate, over arching goal of policies of development. The concept of gross national happiness has been contrasted with the universally well-known indicator of economic growth – GDP – to stress that there are other important dimensions of a society to be attended, primarily through the role of government and that human happiness must not be subordinated to the economy. Happiness is said to be one of the main value to be promoted in Bhutan. Thus, the contemporary Bhutanese policies are, in principle, aimed at creation of a GNH state.

This rapid introduction to the various kinds of state in Bhutan, in past and present, now allows me to conceptualise it in summary form to three varieties. Buddhist state, modern development state, and GNH state—all of which are being experienced in contemporary Bhutan due to conjunctions of traditional and modern influences at play. While, in reality, features of all the three varieties of state are found at the present stage in Bhutan, the dominant characteristics of present-day Bhutanese state is that of development state and GNH state.

The nature and theoretical foundations of a modern development state has appeared widely on analytical screens. This is not surprising since a development state is the kind of state that is part of liberal social and economic theories and practices, which have been spread around the world for a long time. However, structures and processes of a Buddhist state or a GNH state are yet to be defined.

[For the proceedings of the First International Seminar on the Operationalisation of 'Gross National Happiness', see Karma Ura and Karma Galay (eds.) Gross national happiness and development (Thimpu, Bhutan The Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2004) — Editors]

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South Asia Workshop

The State of Sociology: Issues of Relevance and Rigour

Surajkund, Haryana, India 23-25 February 2005

A Report

The South Asia Workshop, the first of its kind, held at Surajkund (Haryana, India) on 23-25 February 2005, provided an opportunity to South Asian sociologists and social anthropologists to meet and exchange information, views and perspectives about the science and craft of sociology in their respective countries. Considering the vicissitudes of sociology, and more generally of higher education, in South Asia during the last three decades or so, the Workshop specially focussed on the issues of relevance and rigour vis-à-vis sociology as it is practiced in different countries in the region.

The need for a common regional platform for the practitioners of sociology and social anthropology in South Asian countries to meet faceto-face to share their experiences and to express their views and concerns has for long been felt Thanks to the initiative of Prof Sujata Patel, Vice-President (National Associations) of the International Sociological Association (ISA), the Indian Sociological Society (New Delhi), in collaboration with the Department of Sociology, University of Colombo (Sri Lanka) and the Department of Sociology, University of Pune (India), took the first step to provide such a platform by organising this Workshop The idea of this Workshop could have hardly become a reality but for the generous sponsorship by the International Sociological Association, the Indian Council of Social Science Research, and the Ford Foundation, the Organising Committee is beholden to them A number of other organisations and individuals extended their support for the successful conduct of the Workshop, the Organising Committee conveys its grateful thanks to them.

In all 38 sociologists/social anthropologists participated in the Workshop They came from different countries Bangladesh (5), Bhutan (1), Pakistan (2) and Sri Lanka (6), though India, as the host country, had the largest contingent (22). In view of the political developments in Nepal, no representative from that country could make it to the Workshop The Workshop was further enriched by the presence of Professor Staffan

Lindberg of the Lund University, representing the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET), and Dr Tina Uys of the University of Johannesburg, representing South Africa, the country to host the 2006 World Congress of Sociology in Durban Each participant had a specific role – as a paper presenter, discussant, chairperson of a session, and/or a special panellist – and this contributed to the active involvement of participants in the proceedings of the Workshop and resulted in high quality discussion

The objective of the Workshop was modest, but of immense import to debate on the theoretical, methodological and substantive issues that confront sociology in South Asian countries, not via the West, but through direct scholar-to-scholar interactions. It was expected that the Workshop would give the practitioners of sociology an opportunity to explore how we, as sociologists, have been dealing with what kinds of issues, with what effect, what factors come in the way of our professional excellence and how we can circumvent them through regional cooperation. A long journey, as the saying goes, begins with a first step Going by the proceedings of the Workshop, which often took on a missionary zeal, the participants as well as the organisers could justifiably feel that the outcome has been the welcome first step in the direction of regional academic cooperation.

The proceedings began with an Introduction to the Programme by Ravinder Kaur (India), Convener of the Workshop On behalf of the Organising Committee, the delegates were welcomed by Siri Hettige (Sri Lanka) Sujata Patel (India) (Vice-President, National Associations, International Sociological Association) presented a brief background to the Workshop The Workshop concluded with a vote of thanks by Jacob John Kattakayam, Secretary of the Indian Sociological Society

In his Welcome Address, Partha N Mukherji, Chairperson of the Organising Committee and President of the Indian Sociological Society, described the meeting as 'a momentous meeting of minds of the sociologists of South Asia' and outlined the scope and objectives of the Workshop. Calling for a free and frank discussion and debate that follows the norms of scientific temper, he drew attention to the urgent need 'to gain from each other and advance the cause of an indigenously routed search for the universals of sociology and social science, so that through social science we are able to serve our people to move in the direction of a just and fair society'. The appositeness of this call for discussion and debate must be understood in the light of the paradoxical fact that, by and large, we have been hitherto trying to grapple with South Asian regional social realities with methods, concepts and theories mainly developed in the West. If this discussion and debate focuses on the question of *relevance*

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of what goes by the name of sociology in the region, the way we practise it raises the question of rigour

The Workshop was divided into five thematic sessions and a concluding panel discussion. In the first session (Theoretical models in sociological research in South Asia. Scope for indigenous interventions), which was chaired by T.N. Madan (India), three papers were presented. Sasanka Perera (Sri Lanka) provided a personal narrative on the (non) existence of critical sociological knowledge production in Sri Lanka, Rowena Robinson (India) reflected on the sociology of Christianity and conversion in India, and Satish Deshpande (India) examined the old predicaments and new anxieties in the practice of sociology in a globalised South Asia Rajni Palriwala (India) and Anupam Sen (Bangladesh) initiated the discussion

The second session (Substantive problem areas of sociological research in South Asia Neglected/priority areas of research), chaired by Nazrul Islam (Bangladesh), had four papers Karma Ura and Dorji Penjore (Bhutan) explained their research on 'gross national happiness', examining the crisis in Indian sociology, Hetukar Jha (India) made out a case for according priority to 'regional' studies, Gulzar Shah (Pakistan) provided an overview of the challenges and opportunities for sociology in Pakistan; and, taking the case of North-east India, C. Nunthara (India) brought to focus the idea of 'frontier areas'. Mahbub Ahmed (Bangladesh) and N Shanmugalingam (Sri Lanka) initiated the discussion

From theoretical models and substantive areas, the focused shifted to questions of methodology in the third session (*Methodologies in sociological research in South Asia Scope for innovative research*) This session, chaired by Partha N. Mukherji (India) had three papers. Focusing on voice, event and narrative, Roma Chatterjee (India) outlined the methodological strategy she has employed in studying everyday life in a Mumbai slum, Pradeep Jeganathan (Sri Lanka) presented some notes on categories and methods in some recent social science research in Sri Lanka, and Vinod Jairath (India) compared three different discourses and representations of inter-community relations in India. N Jayaram (India) and J P S Uberoi (India) led the discussion

Sociology is more than a sum of theory, method and substance, it has ideological orientations. Thus premised, the fourth session (*Ideological orientations in sociological research Values and objectivity revisited*), chaired by Chaudhary Inayatullah (Pakistan), carried three papers. Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake (Sri Lanka) reflected on globalisation and the remaking of the sociological imagination, dealing with environmental and disaster perspectives in sociology, Mahbuba Nasreen (Bangladesh) made a case for a 'paradigm shift', and Vivek Kumar (India) critiqued

the Indian sociology from the vantage point of dalits The ensuing discussion was led by Paramjit S. Judge (India) and S M. Dahiwale (India)

The four papers in the last of the thematic sessions (Institutional contexts and state policy towards research and teaching), chaired by Rangalal Sen (Bangladesh), dealt with more mundane issues concerning the practice of sociology. Nadeem Omer Tarar's (Pakistan) paper on the state of anthropology in Pakistan during 1975-2002 was presented in absentia by Chaudhary Inayatullah and Gulzar Shah (Pakistan), Nasreen Fazalbhoy (India) discussed the directions, trends and prospects of the sociology of Muslims in India, Jani de Silva (Sri Lanka) analysed the impact of collective violence on sociological and anthropological research in post-colonial Sri Lanka, and Ravinder Kaur (India) examined the predicament of the humanities and social sciences in institutes of technology in India. Satish Saberwal (India) and Arun Bali (India) initiated the discussion

The deliberations at the Workshop threw open a number of general issues and concerns. Admittedly, these issues are not new, their persistence, however, calls for not only wider deliberation, but also concerted action

- (1) The need for indigenisation of sociology for making the discipline contextualised and relevant. Does indigenisation mean parochialism? How do we look for the universal in the particular? Is a researcher's searching for the indigenous contingent on the circumstances he or she is placed? How do we distinguish the academic agenda of indigenisation from its political counterpart? How do we resist the temptation to adopt ideologically charged conceptual tools, ignoring critical judgement?
- (2) The value connotation of the question of relevance From whose point of view is relevance to be established or gauged? Are not what we choose to research, and how we formulate research questions and how we seek to answer them value-determined? How do we address the inevitable merging of the researcher and the researched in social research? Does indigenisation exhaust the question of relevance?
- (3) The misplaced juxtaposition between quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and the tendency towards methodological fundamentalism of respective practitioners or the uncritical attempts at blending the two. Those entering social sciences are generally weak in mathematics, and their training in quantitative techniques is obviously ineffective. The adoption of qualitative methodology is, thus, by default, without a serious consideration of the ontology and epistemology underpinning it. It is expectedly of a spurious quality. How do we address these issues in our teaching and training programmes in research methodology?

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(4) Be it quantitative or qualitative, rigour is missing in much of sociological research. Have we become extremely tolerant of the declining rigour and allowed methodology to be ritualised? How do we bring rigour back into methodology in both teaching and practice of sociological research?

- (5) The importance of interdisciplinary approach How imperative is it to transcend disciplinary boundaries for better understanding of the issues? How important is the historical perspective 'a sense of the long-term' to understand social phenomenon?
- (6) The problems and prospects of teaching of sociology in the vernacular/local/non-English languages and the place of English in the system of education What are the problems of teaching sociology in the vernacular? How do we address these problems? How important is it to translate sociological writings in South Asian languages into English? What is the place of English in sociological training in South Asian countries?
- (7) The inadequacy of facilities for research in social sciences, especially as compared with to the West How can we augment the facilities for sociological research, and the share the limited facilities that we have? Can we think of a regional resource centre for socio-logical research? How do we go about lobbying for such a resource centre? How do we address the problem of lack of publishing avenues in some South Asian countries? How can we broad-base the channels of publication and dissemination currently available?

The Workshop was also host to a few related activities Dr K R Narayanan, former President of India, released the fifth volume of 'Themes in India Sociology' series and addressed the participants, Staffan Lindberg (Director, SASNET) introduced the scope and activities of Swedish South Asian Studies Network, and Tina Uys (Treasurer, Local Organising Committee and South African Sociological Association's Representative for the National Associations Council, South Africa) presented a paper on the 'History of South African Sociology' and talked about the 2006 World Congress of Sociology in Durban

The Workshop concluded with a panel discussion on sociological perspectives chaired by T K Oommen (India) The panellists included Chaudhary Inayatullah (Pakistan), Nazrul Islam (Bangladesh), Siri Hettige (Sri Lanka) and Sujata Patel (India) The discussion weaved together the key issues that emerged in the five substantive sessions and sought to arrive at a consensus on the future course of action

Considering the constraint of resources and the need for a more focused deliberation, the Workshop could not be larger than it was However, the deliberations at the Workshop need to be disseminated

among the practitioners of sociology in South Asian countries, and that too, without loss of time, as we can ill afford to lose the zeal and consensus ensuing from the Workshop Accordingly, it was decided to bring out the revised versions of the papers presented at the Workshop in a special issue of Sociological Bulletin, the official journal of the Indian Sociological Society This special issue of the Bulletin – Volume 54, Number 3, September-December 2005 – will be guest-edited by N Jayaram, Ravindei Kaur and Partha N Mukherji. So as to reach a wider audience beyond South Asia, negotiations are also on for a re-publication of this issue as an independent volume

With this Workshop, South Asian sociologists have begun a meaningful dialogue. To carry forward this dialogue, to facilitate the networking of sociologists in the region, and eventually to form a South Asia Association of Sociologists, a Steering Committee was set up Nazrul Islam (Bangladesh) was entrusted with the responsibility of convening this Committee, which will have Chaudhary Inayatullah (Pakistan), Karma Ura/Dorji Penjore (Bhutan), Ravinder Kaur (India), and Siri Hettige (Sri Lanka) as its members, a member from Nepal will be co-opted If the resolve of the participants at the Workshop was any indication, the formation of this association as a forum for regional co-operation in sociology will take place sooner than expected. The Workshop could not have hoped for anything more!

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